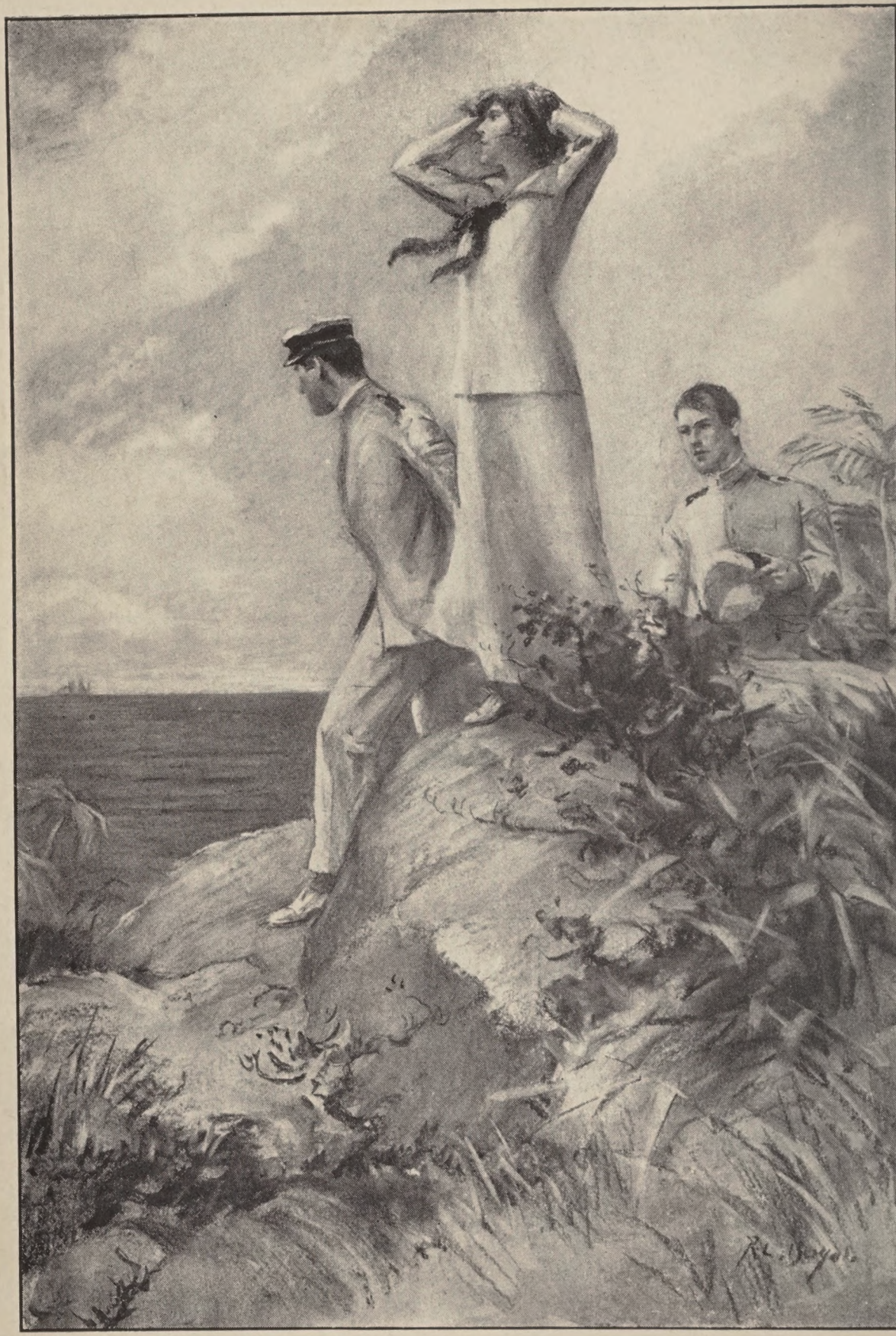
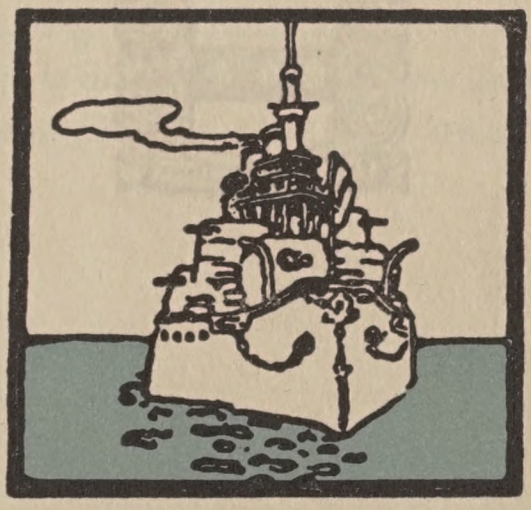


"ISN'T IT WORTH COMING FOR?"

A UNITED STATES MIDSHIPMAN IN THE SOUTH SEAS

by

Lt. Com. Yates Stirling Jr. U.S.N.
Author of
"A U.S. Midshipman Afloat"
"A U.S. Midshipman in China"
"A U.S. Midshipman in the Philippines"
"A U.S. Midshipman in Japan"



Illustrated by Ralph L Boyer

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During the process of empire building, even to-day carried on by the great powers, the far distant South Sea Islands received their share of attention from designing cabinets.

In their patriotic desire to further the cause of their country many sailors laid down their lives in battles with the natives.

These small wars are scarcely remembered at home, but in the islands where the rivalry between the nations was bitterest, there stand impressive monuments to these sailor heroes, and in their songs the chivalrous islanders praise the virtues of their fallen foes.

To the sailors of all nations who thus met death, fighting in their country's cause, these pages are dedicated.

Introduction

In this story Midshipmen Phil Perry and Sydney Monroe, together with Boatswain's Mate "Jack" O'Neil, act through an historic drama of a South Sea war.

The same characters have seen active service in many parts of the world.

In "A United States Midshipman Afloat," life in a battle-ship of the Atlantic fleet, together with a typical South American revolution, furnished the setting. In "A United States Midshipman in China," the midshipmen and O'Neil help to rescue an American Mission and put an end to a "Boxer" uprising. In "A United States Midshipman in the Philippines," the same officers see very active service on board a gunboat in coöperation with the army against the Filipino insurgents.

In "A United States Midshipman in Japan," they discover a plot to bring the United States and Japan into open hostilities over the

purchase of some foreign war-ships. War is narrowly averted through the detective work of the midshipmen and their Japanese classmate at Annapolis, but now a lieutenant in the Imperial Navy.

The present volume carries the midshipmen through further thrilling scenes that occurred in an island of the far-away South Seas. The portrayal of native life is faithful and many of the incidents are historic.

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A United States Midshipman in the South Seas.

A United States Midshipman in the South Seas

CHAPTER I

THE RIVAL CHIEFS

A MAN-OF-WAR boat propelled by six sailormen and with the flag of the United States flying fron its staff navigated the tortuous channel through the fringing coral reef and landed upon the sandy beach of the harbor of Ukula.

Three American naval officers from the cruiser "Sitka" stepped from the boat upon the shore.

In the great public square on Kulinuu Point at one end of the town many thousands of the natives of the Kapuan Islands had gathered. They had come from all the villages of the islands by special invitation from the Herzovinian consul for the purpose of giving welcome to their great war chief

Kataafa, who had but just returned from five long years of exile in a foreign land.

Toward this assemblage the three officers bent their steps. They were shown to their chairs by obsequious Herzovinian sailors and found themselves placed with the English officers from their war-ship in port. The Herzovinian officers sat close to their consul, who, in all the splendor of a court uniform, his chest covered with medals, was enthroned under a bower of freshly cut shrubs and flowers.

The American captain, Commander Tazewell, regarded the Herzovinian officials, a twinkle of merriment in his eyes.

"All their paint and powder is on thick," he said, smiling good-humoredly, to his two companions, Midshipmen Philip Perry and Sydney Monroe, who had accompanied him ashore to be present at this novel ceremony.

Phil was gazing with open-eyed admiration at the handsome islanders.

"I mean the Herzovinian officers," Commander Tazewell added. "It's a hot day for special full dress uniform, but 'noblesse oblige,' I suppose."

The American consul, Mr. Lee, accompanied by the chief justice of Kapua, Judge Lindsay, walked solemnly behind their sailor escort and seated themselves in chairs reserved for them between the English and American officers. Their ladies were escorted to seats in another stand.

Mr. Lee remained standing until the two young women who had accompanied him had been shown seats, then he sat down with an audible exclamation of annoyance.

"Judge," he exclaimed, "be prepared to be outraged. I know these pig-headed Herzovinians well enough to appreciate that they never do things half-way."

"We were fools to come and be insulted," the judge snapped, removing his soft "Panama" and wiping his moist forehead. "Look at that stand of theirs; looks like a Christmas tree—the very thing to catch the savage eye. Here are we in our democratic simplicity."

The two midshipmen gazed about; the wonderful spectacle delighted them. Several thousands of Kapuan men and women collected in mathematical accuracy had formed

a great square about the Herzovinian officials. In front were the women, garbed in colors of flaming hue, their dark hair loose over their shoulders. The scarlet hibiscus blossom woven into necklaces and entwined in their blue-black locks was both effective and startling. The men were naked to the lava-lava covering about their waists, their copper brown skins glistening with cocoanut oil.

"There's Kataafa," Commander Tazewell said to his companions at his side. "He and Panu-Mafili are rivals to the Kapuan throne, and the final decision is now in the hands of Judge Lindsay." The midshipmen had arrived in Kapua only that morning on the mail steamer from San Francisco.

"Kataafa is the high chief who has always rebelled against the king," the commander added. "The Herzovinians deported him to one of their penal islands after his warriors had killed many of their sailors, and now they are giving him a royal welcome."

"Where's Panu-Mafili?" Phil asked excitedly, after he had feasted his eyes upon the high chief sitting next the Herzovinian consul.

Commander Tazewell indicated a small

native squatting on the ground in front of the assemblage. He seemed dwarfed in comparison to the giant next him.

"The big one alongside of him is Tuamana," the commander explained. "He has always been loyal to the legal king, and is a fine character and a great fighter. We'll call upon him by and by."

With a flourish of trumpets the ceremony began. The band then struck up the impressive Herzovinian national air, and all rose to their feet.

The Herzovinian consul, Mr. Carlson, moved forward after the music had ceased. He held in his hand a paper which he raised above his head, praying silence.

The midshipmen listened eagerly.

"What language is it?" Phil whispered. He could not recognize a word. From different quarters of the great crowd could be heard the native "talking men" repeating the words until they were heard by every native.

Phil riveted his attention upon the sea of native faces opposite him, endeavoring to surprise their thoughts, and thus obtain knowledge of what was being said.

"I can't follow him," Commander Tazewell whispered to Phil, "but I see it's making a great impression." He turned slowly in his chair to observe the effect upon Judge Lindsay and Mr. Lee, both of whom spoke Kapuan fluently.

Judge Lindsay's under lip was noticeably quivering, while Mr. Lee ground his teeth in silent rage.

An exclamation from Phil caused the commander to turn again. The tall warrior and Panu-Mafili, the other candidate for kingship, had turned their backs upon the speaker and were talking to their followers behind them. Almost as one man they obeyed the call, and nearly five hundred natives slowly and with great dignity marched away, leaving a gaping hole in the symmetry of the square.

Mr. Carlson's flow of native eloquence came to a sudden stop. He gazed in apparent bewilderment about him. Then from the departing natives came in melodious rhythm the words, sung over and over again—"Malea-Toa-Panu-Tupu-e-Kapua"—Malea Toa Panu is King of Kapua.

"I'm afraid I can't stand to hear the rest

myself," Judge Lindsay declared, unable to control himself longer. He rose to his feet and walked away with great dignity. Mr. Lee and the British consul followed.

"I am going to stick it through," Commander Sturdy, of the British war-ship "Hyacinth," exclaimed as he changed his seat to one next to Commander Tazewell. "I can't understand a jolly word, you know, but it's as good as a musical opera at home."

Chief Kataafa now stood beside Mr. Carlson, while Klinger, the manager of the Herzovinian firm's plantations in Kapua, called the "Kapuan Firm," called loudly to the natives for silence.

"The worst is yet to come," Commander Tazewell laughed. The Herzovinian sailor company of a hundred strong, their rifles shining brightly in the sunlight, had smartly taken the position of "present arms." "But quiet must be restored before the remainder of this impressive ceremony will be retailed out to us," he added impressively.

Mr. Carlson solemnly placed a wreath of royal yellow about the chief's neck. The assemblage suddenly burst forth in uncontrolled

savage joy. Then as if by magic this demonstration was stilled by the music of a gun. The Herzovinian war-ship was firing a salute in honor of the returned exiles.

"Nineteen guns, I suppose," Commander Sturdy said. Every one was counting, the natives most of all. The nineteenth gun had fired. All held their breath. This was the salute usually given a high chief. There seemed a perceptible pause and then another crash reverberated across the water, and yet another.

"A royal salute," all gasped. Again pandemonium broke loose among the Kataafa adherents. Herzovinia had acknowledged Kataafa as king of Kapua.

Commander Tazewell's face suddenly dropped its joviality. The British captain said things under his breath, while the American and English officers gazed at each other, utterly speechless with surprise.

"Kataafa Tupu-e-Kapua[1]—ah," the song burst forth, drowning out all other sounds.

The stands were quickly emptied. The American and English officers joined the

[1] Kataafa is king of Kapua.

resident ladies of their nationality and escorted them in angry silence away from the scene.

Judge Lindsay and Mr. Lee were encountered only a few hundred yards away. Mr. Lee called Commander Tazewell to his side.

"We are waiting to hear from Mr. Carlson what is the meaning of this treachery," he exclaimed. "Judge Lindsay goes so far as to believe that now a war over the title of king of Kapua cannot be averted. It is outrageous."

Phil and Sydney gazed with interest at the daughters of the American consul, Mr. Lee, whom they had not met, and were greatly disappointed when they heard him direct them to return home immediately. The midshipmen remained behind with their captain.

The Herzovinian consul, accompanied by Klinger and a stranger and followed by several naval officers, soon appeared. Their faces were wreathed in smiles and their shoulders were decorated with circlets of flowers placed there by the jubilant Kataafa adherents.

Judge Lindsay placed himself squarely in their path. His face was pale, and he held his cane clutched firmly in his hand.

"Mr. Carlson," he exclaimed in a clear vibrant voice, "I desire you to state to me, as chief justice of Kapua, publicly and at once, your authority in making such a speech, acknowledging for Herzovinia the claim of Kataafa to be king of Kapua. Further, I desire to hear the authority for the salute of twenty-one guns, a salute given only to a king. As chief justice of these islands I represent the Herzovinian law as well as the law of England and America. Do I understand, sir, that you have set aside law, the law of the treaty between the three great nations, and have rendered a decision in favor of Kataafa, even while I am still deliberating upon the justice of these two claimant chiefs for the title of king?"

Mr. Carlson's face was a study. He looked appealingly to the stranger beside him as if for support. Phil was astonished to note the evident gleam of triumph in the stranger's eyes. The lad regarded him closely. He was tall and finely built; his face was pale and highly intellectual in appearance. He appeared to be a man of great force of character.

"My dear judge," Mr. Carlson floundered

hopelessly. "Come with us to the consulate. This is really not the place for dispute."

They had been surrounded by inquisitive natives of all sizes, who are quick to scent an altercation, and even though not understanding the words, like all nature's children, can read the language of the eye, the face and the hand.

"Don't dear me," the judge exclaimed, even more angrily. "Your treachery was public; my condemnation of it shall be public also."

Mr. Carlson's face streamed with perspiration. He was a big man and inclined to be fat. His gorgeous uniform fitted like a glove. Under a torrid sun he was a picture of woe.

The stranger whispered in the consul's ear. Phil noted that the red face suddenly cleared.

"You have misunderstood, judge," Mr. Carlson began, not at all certain of his ground, but his voice gained strength as he continued. "I did not say he was Tupu[1] of Kapua. That you must decide. I only hailed Kataafa as Tupu. Being the choice of so many villages makes him Tupu. That was my meaning. Kataafa and Panu-Mafili are both Tupu, but

[1] Tupu—King.

neither is yet Tupu-e-Kapua." Mr. Carlson was now smiling benignly upon the judge.

Judge Lindsay made a sign of disgust.

"Do you take me for a babe in arms?" he exploded. "How dare you insult my intelligence by such an absolute and unnecessary falsehood! Whether you know what you read or not, I do know. I heard and understood. You did not mince matters there." He drew himself up haughtily and glared defiantly and for the first time at the stranger and Klinger.

"The Kapuan language, to one who knows it, is not difficult. I advise you, Mr. Carlson, hereafter to stick to a language you know, otherwise your able co-conspirators will be putting embarrassing words into your innocent mouth."

A ripple of suppressed merriment rose unrebuked at the judge's sally. Mr. Carlson seemed too dazed and worried to make any reply.

The judge bowed ceremoniously, linking his arm in that of Mr. Lee, and walked away.

CHAPTER II

DISCORD AMONG THE WHITES

THE day after the ceremony of welcome to Kataafa, Phil and Sydney again accompanied their captain on shore. Commander Tazewell took a lively interest in everything that was going on and was delighted to have such enthusiastic young supporters.

"You'll find," he said after they had landed and sent the boat away, "that the natives of both factions are equally friendly to us. That is a good sign and I hope it will continue."

The highroad of Ukula was filled with half-naked muscular men and lithe, graceful, dark-eyed women. Every native exhaled the acrid odor of cocoanut oil. The men's long hair was plastered white with lime and tied on top in the form of a topknot.

"The lime bleaches the hair red, you know," Commander Tazewell explained, noting the lads' curiosity at this peculiar custom. "The

oil is to prevent them from catching cold. They go into the water, you see, any hour of the day, and when they come out they are as dry as ducks."

The officers had landed at Kulinuu, the traditional residence of the Malea-Toa family, from which many kings had been chosen and to which Panu-Mafili belonged. On every hand they encountered good-natured smiling natives. "Talofa, Alii"[1] was on every lip.

"Ten thousand of these fellows are encamped in the vicinity of Ukula waiting to see who the chief justice makes their king," the commander said. "You see," he added, "strange as it may seem to us, two chiefs may rightfully be elected. Election depends upon quality of votes rather than upon quantity. So according to traditional Kapuan custom when two kings are elected, they decide it by having a big battle. That is the normal way, but we have persuaded the natives that arbitration is more civilized. Now the chief justice decides and the three nations support that decision."

"It looks rather as though Herzovinia

[1] Talofa, Alii—Good-day, chief.

would support the judge only in case he decides for Kataafa," Sydney said questioningly. "If that country refuses to back up the judge what will happen?"

Commander Tazewell was thoughtful for half a minute.

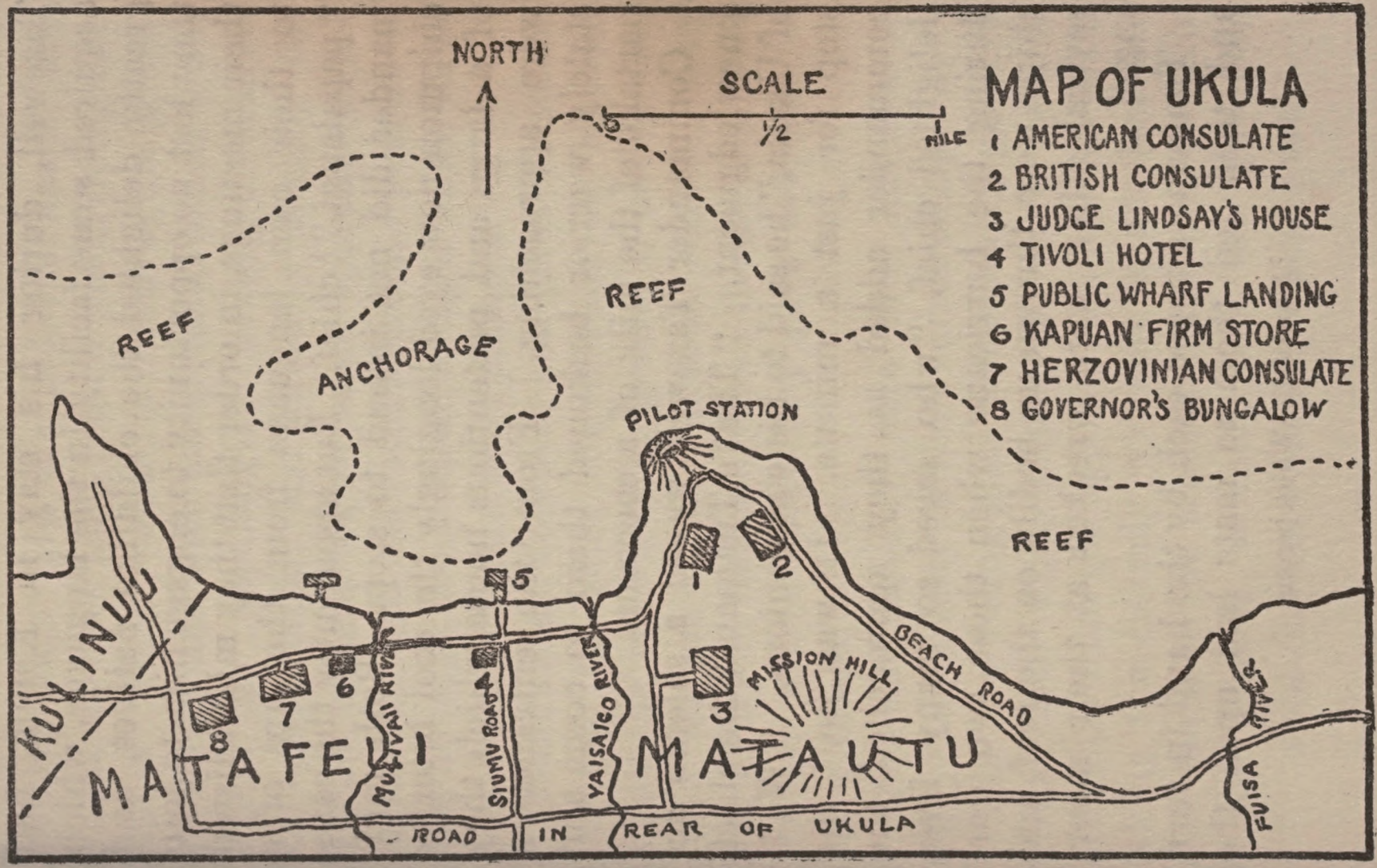
"According to the treaty all are required to agree," he answered. "There is no choice. Once the decision is made that creates a king, all who oppose him are rebels. That is the law, and these foreign war-ships are here to uphold Judge Lindsay's decision, right or wrong."

As the three pedestrians, dressed in their white duck uniforms, white helmets protecting their heads from the tropical sun, reached the hard coral road leading along the shore of the bay, the panorama of the harbor opened and delighted the eyes of the young men.

The white coral reef, lying beneath scarcely half a fathom of water, was peopled by natives gathering shell-fish to feed the greater influx of population. On the bosom of the dark green water, beyond the inner reef, and almost encircled by spurs of a second ledge of coral, lay anchored the war-ships of three

great nations. In the foreground, lying on their sides, two twisted red-stained hulls, the bleaching bones of once proud men-of-war, told of the sport of giant waves that had hurled them a hundred yards along the inner reef and drowned many of their crews. This manifestation of the power of a tropical hurricane, that might come almost unheralded out of the watery waste, prevented any relaxation of vigilance. At all times the war-ships were kept ready to seek safety at sea, clear of the treacherous coral reefs. To be caught at anchor in the harbor of Ukula when a hurricane broke could mean only another red-stained wreck upon the reef.

The road soon left the water's edge. Now it ran several hundred yards inland through groves of cocoanut, banana and breadfruit trees. Fringing the road were many spider-like, grass-thatched native houses, similar to those they had seen among the groves at Kulinuu. Seated on mats under these shelters were numerous natives, and the Americans as they progressed received frequent cordial invitation to stop and refresh themselves from the very hospitable islanders. Commander


NORTH
SCALE
½
MILE
MAP OF UKULA
1 AMERICAN CONSULATE
2 BRITISH CONSULATE
3 JUDGE LINDSAY'S HOUSE
4 TIVOLI HOTEL
5 PUBLIC WHARF LANDING
6 KAPUAN FIRM STORE
7 HERZOVINIAN CONSULATE
8 GOVERNOR'S BUNGALOW
REEF
ANCHORAGE
REEF
PILOT STATION
REEF
KULINUU
MATAFELI
MATAUTU
MULIVAI RIVER
SIUMU ROAD
YAISAICO RIVER
MISSION HILL
BEACH ROAD
FUISA HILL
ROAD IN REAR OF UKULA

Tazewell, during his stay in Kapua, had acquired some facility in the language, which greatly delighted the childlike natives, and they lost no opportunity to engage him to join their meetings, in order that they might listen to their own language from the lips of a "papalangi"[1] chief. But apparently the commander did not intend to stop. Both midshipmen now eyed longingly the cool interior of a large and pretentious house which they were approaching. From the entrance a stately warrior beckoned them to come and partake of the milk of a cocoanut.

Commander Tazewell waved a solemn acknowledgment. "That's Tuamana, the chief of Ukula," he said to his companions. "We'll stop for just a minute. It was he," the commander added as they approached the delighted chief, "who saved so many lives during the hurricane when those two warships were thrown up bodily on the reef, and several others were wrecked at their moorings."

Tuamana grasped each by the hand in turn and then led them to mats laid upon the

[1] Papalangi—White person.

pebbly floor. He clapped his hands, and almost at once from behind the dividing curtain of "Tapa"[1] cloth, two native girls glided, gracefully and with outstretched hands, to the side of the "papalangis." Seating themselves the girls began industriously fanning the heated officers. Phil soon appreciated the reason for this delicate attention; swarms of flies hovered about them, to fight which alone would soon exhaust one's patience.

Commander Tazewell and Chief Tuamana engaged in quiet conversation in Kapuan while the chief's talking-man, a native educated at one of the mission schools, came frequently to their aid when the commander's limited native vocabulary gave evidence of being inadequate.

Phil and Sydney were thus left free to enjoy the novelty of their surroundings.

The two young girls fanned and giggled in turns until Phil, unused to such delicate attention from the opposite sex, insisted upon taking the cleverly wrought banana leaf fan, and much to the amusement of the two girls began fanning himself and the girl too.

[1] Tapa—Native cloth beaten out of mulberry bark.

After a few moments this young lady arose, bowed and disappeared behind the screen convulsed with laughter.

"You've offended her," insisted Sydney. "Haven't you learned yet to give women their own way?"

But Phil's gallantry was to receive its reward. A third graceful Kapuan girl, her high caste face beaming upon them, glided through the tapa screen. Bowing low before Commander Tazewell, she took the vacant place at Phil's side.

Commander Tazewell made a jesting remark in Kapuan, which caused every one to laugh except the two midshipmen.

"This is Tuamana's daughter Avao," the commander said. "I told her she'd have a difficult time making a choice between my two handsome aides; but I see she has made up her mind already."

Avao had taken the fan from Phil's hand and was now efficiently fanning him.

A half hour later as they were standing, bidding good-bye to their hosts, Commander Tazewell announced to Phil that the chief's daughter had paid him a signal honor.

"She wants you to be her "felinge,"[1] he said, his grave eyes sparkling. "It's a Tapau's[2] privilege to choose. Your obligation is to present her with soap, tooth powder, in fact, anything she fancies that you can get in the ship's store. For this you are privileged to drink as many cocoanuts and eat as much fruit as you desire at her father's house. She will even send you presents of fruit, tapa and fans. If I were Mr. Monroe, I'd envy you your luck, for Avao is the belle of Ukula."

Avao blushed under her bronze and playfully struck the commander with her fan.

"Leonga Alii!"[3] she exclaimed abashed.

"She understands and speaks English as well as I do," he said, laughing at the girl's sudden shyness. "Once I thought she'd make me her felinge, but I suppose youth takes rank."

Once more on the road Commander Tazewell became again serious.

"That affair yesterday is taking on a darker aspect," he confided. "Tuamana says that every one knows among the natives that if

[1] Felinge—Literally friend, a benefactor.

[2] Tapau—Princess of a village. [3] Leonga Alii—Bad chief.

Judge Lindsay decides for Panu-Mafili then Kataafa has been persuaded by the Herzovinians to make war.

"Tuamana, of course," he added, "is a loyal man. He is on Panu's side, but will be loyal to whom Judge Lindsay decides is really the king."

In front of the big wooden store in the Matafeli district of the town, Commander Tazewell stopped. Many natives were gathered there. The porch was crowded, while within the store there seemed to be only standing room.

"What mischief is going on here?" he exclaimed, a perplexed frown on his face.

Suddenly Klinger and the stranger of yesterday darkened the doorway. The stranger gazed coldly upon the Americans but gave no sign of recognition. He and Klinger continued to talk in their guttural Herzovinian tongues.

Phil suddenly observed that the air of friendliness they had noted earlier was now lacking. The natives no longer greeted them. Instead in the native eye was a sheepish, sullen look.

"That was Count Rosen," Commander Tazewell said as they again moved onward. "Klinger, of course, is active and sides with Kataafa. Klinger's wife is a native, you know, a close relative of the high chief. I suppose he'd like to have royalty in the family."

"The store looked like a recruiting station," Phil suggested.

Commander Tazewell nodded gravely. "It may be," he replied.

The Matautu section of Ukula, set aside for the official residences of the consuls of England and the United States, was being approached.

At the gate of the American consulate, Mr. Lee hailed them. The consul was naturally a peace loving man, and the fact that he had with him in Kapua his two daughters was an added argument for peace.

"Come in, commander," he called from his doorway.

They turned in through the gateway.

"All manner of war rumors," Mr. Lee exclaimed, as he shook hands, "are going the rounds. The latest is that a paper has been

found written by Herzovinian statesmen some years ago declaring their country would never, never permit Kataafa to be king. The Kapuans believe that this will make Judge Lindsay decide for Panu-Mafili. Until that disgraceful affair of yesterday, and the rumor of this paper, we all thought that whatever the decision the three consuls would unite to prevent war. Panu-Mafili has said openly he and his followers would abide by the decision. Kataafa appeared willing, but has as yet made no statement.

"The situation is alarming, commander," Mr. Lee added gravely, "and I for one am at a loss what should be done."

"Arrest the white men who are inciting Kataafa to revolt in the event of an adverse decision and ship them from Kapua; that's my remedy," Commander Tazewell answered promptly.

"Count Rosen and Klinger," the consul exclaimed. "Impossible!"

Commander Tazewell shrugged his shoulders.

"It's the one way to prevent war," he said.

"The Herzovinian consul, after agreeing to stand with us and prevent a war, has now assumed a mysterious air of importance and we can get nothing definite from him," Mr. Lee complained bitterly. "If my advice had only been followed and Kataafa kept away until after a new king had been crowned, this perplexing state could not have existed."

Commander Tazewell was thoughtful for several minutes.

"Mr. Lee," he said gravely, "I believe that bringing Kataafa back at this time was a Herzovinian plan. The chief has been in exile for five years and in a Herzovinian colony, and I hear was treated as a prince instead of a prisoner. Although his warriors killed Herzovinian sailors in the last revolt, now he favors that nation. Once he is king of Kapua he will advance all Herzovinian interests. They may hope even for annexation, a dream long cherished by Klinger and his countrymen.

"Yes, if the judge decides against Kataafa there will be war," he concluded solemnly.

Phil and Sydney listened eagerly. Though these native affairs were not easy to under-

stand, yet they could not interrupt and ask for explanations.

At this time there came an interruption in the serious talk between Commander Tazewell and Mr. Lee. It was the arrival of the two young ladies. They had been out in the "bush," as the country back of the sea beach is called in Kapua. They appeared, their young faces glowing with health from their recent exercise and their arms full of the scarlet "pandanus" blossoms.

Margaret, the older girl, was a woman in spite of her nineteen years. She greeted the newcomers to Kapua with a grace that won the midshipmen at once. Alice, two years her junior, caught the boyish fancy of the lads instantly. She seemed to carry with her the free air of the woods, and exhaled its freshness. She had scarcely a trace of the reserve in manner of her older sister. Her greeting was spontaneously frank and unabashed.

While Margaret presided at the tea table, around which Commander Tazewell and the consul gathered, Alice impressed the willing midshipmen into her service, and with their

arms loaded with the pandanus flowers, led them to the dining-room. Here she placed the brilliant blossoms into numerous vases, giving to the room with its paucity of furniture a gala aspect.

"Do you care for tea?" she said questioningly, implying clearly a negative answer, which both lads were quick to catch.

"Never take it," Phil replied quickly. "Do you, Syd?"

Sydney smiled and shook his head.

"Because if you don't, while the others are drinking it, we can climb Mission Hill back of the town and enjoy the view of the harbor. It's not far," she added glancing at the spotless white uniform of the young officers.

She led them at a rapid pace across the garden and by a narrow path into a thickly wooded copse. The path was apparently one not frequently used and was choked with creepers and underbrushes. After a score of yards the path led at a steep angle up the wooded side of one of the low surrounding hills, which at Matautu descended almost to the harbor's edge. Here the shore is rocky and dangerous.

Alice climbed with the ease of a wood sprite, while the midshipmen lumbered after her in their endeavor to keep pace.

"Here we are," she cried joyfully as she sprang up the last few feet of incline and seated herself in the fork of a small mulberry tree.

Out of breath, their white trousers and white canvas shoes stained with the juice of entangling vines, and with perspiration streaming in little rivulets down their crimson faces, the two young men looked with amazement at their slim pace-maker; she was not even out of breath.

"Isn't it worth coming for?" she exclaimed, perfect enjoyment in her girlish voice. "See, the town and the harbor and all the ships lie at our feet; and everything looks so very near;" then she added whimsically, "I sometimes pretend I am queen and order everything and every one about—no one else ever comes here," she explained quickly. "My sister Margaret came once, but never came again."

"It's not easy to get here," Sydney said, panting slightly, "but it would more than be worth the trouble if by coming one could

really know the feeling of being a king or a queen. I haven't sufficient imagination. What should you do if you were queen?" he asked of Alice.

She drew her brows down thoughtfully.

"I don't know all that I should do," she replied earnestly, "but the very first thing would be to send away every papalangi."

"The war-ships too?" Phil inquired. "I call that hospitable!"

"I might keep you," indicating both lads by a wave of her free hand, "as leaders for my army, but every one else would be sent away and leave these children of nature free to live their lives as God intended they should." A deep conviction in the girl's voice was not lost upon the midshipmen.

"Suppose you tell us of Kapua," Phil said gently, after a short silence.

"Yes, do," Sydney urged eagerly.

"Tell you of Kapua Uma,"[1] Alice said wistfully. "I have lived here now three years, and I feel as if the people were my people. They are gentle, generous and lovable, except when they are excited by the papalangi.

[1] Kapua Uma—The real Kapua.

The white men have brought only trouble and sorrow to the islands. No Kapuan has ever broken his word, except when the white men have betrayed him. In all their wars they have been generous to their foes. They never harm women and children. The white men incite war, but are free from injury, except when they attack the Kapuans first.

"Once all the rich land near the sea belonged to Kapua. Now white men have stolen it away by fraud and deceit." Alice's eyes flashed indignantly, while her hearers were thrilled by the fervor in her young voice. "The foreign firm of which Klinger is manager, called the 'Kapuan Firm,' owned by Herzovinian capital, is no ordinary company of South Sea traders," she added. "It is the feet of the Herzovinian Empire, holding the door of annexation open. The firm's business grows greater every year. They import black labor from the Solomon Islands and hold them to work as slaves. The treaty gives the Kapuans the right to choose their king, but the firm will sanction no king who will not first agree to further the interests of the Kapuan firm.

"Kataafa once fought against the firm and won, but he was exiled by the Herzovinian government. Now a majority of people again wish him for king, and this time the firm is not only willing but anxious that he should he made king. England and America represented in Kapua see in this a bid for annexation. Judge Lindsay will soon decide between Kataafa and Panu-Mafili. Panu has given his word he will not fight. Kataafa signed a sworn agreement in order to obtain the consent of the three Powers to his return from exile, that he would never again take up arms."

Alice stopped breathless. "There you have the full history of Kapua in a nutshell," she added laughingly as she slipped down from her seat.

"Poor Panu-Mafili is only a boy. His father, you know, was the late king Malea-Toa or 'Laupepe,' a 'sheet of paper,' as the natives called him, because he was intellectual. Panu begged to be allowed to go away and study," she said, "but our great governments need him as a big piece in the political chess game."

"More aptly a pawn," Phil corrected.

Alice was gazing wistfully seaward.

"Out there," she said after a moment's silence, "is a sail. It's probably the 'Talofa,' a schooner from the Fiji. The natives say 'Bully' Scott and the 'Talofa' scent out wars in the South Seas and arrive just in time to sell a shipload of rifles."

The midshipmen saw the tops of a "sail" far out on the horizon.

"If Kataafa needs guns to defy the chief justice, there they are," she added.

"Isn't it against the law to sell guns to the natives?" Sydney asked.

Alice regarded him with high disdain.

"'Bully' Scott knows no law nor nationality," she replied. "To give your nationality in Kapua is a disadvantage, because then your consul interferes with your business. When you're trading in 'blacks' and guns, it's best to deprive yourself of the luxury of a country. 'Bully' Scott is from the world."

"How do you know that is the 'Talofa'?" Phil asked incredulously, but all the same greatly interested.

"I don't know," she answered gayly as she led the way toward home; "but the 'Talofa'

is a schooner, and the natives believe she will come. And that's a schooner."

Her logic was not convincing to the midshipmen, but then they had not lived three years in Kapua. Schooners were not frequent visitors at Ukula.

CHAPTER III

PLOTTING FOR POWER

THE Herzovinian consul sat upon his wide verandah gazing out upon the quiet bay of Ukula. His usually serene face wore a troubled look. Count Rosen paced the porch restlessly. His well-knit figure was becomingly clad in a military khaki riding suit, and he held a heavy rhinoceros hide whip in his hand. Consul Carlson was over fifty. Rosen was not over thirty, and appeared even younger.

Count Rosen was talking while Mr. Carlson listened with an unusual air of deference.

"When Kataafa was hurried here from Malut, the island of his exile, our foreign office expected you to have paved the way to make him king." The speaker struck a picturesque stand in front of the consul's chair. "Instead you have been fraternizing with these other consuls. The chief justice

has you under his thumb. Is that the way to bring on a crisis?"

The Herzovinian consul swallowed a lump in his throat. It was hard to be taken to task by such a young man.

"Count Rosen," he answered, a sudden spark of resentment coming into his small eyes, "if I have displeased the foreign office, I can resign."

"Resign," the count exclaimed disgustedly. "Why talk of resigning with such an opportunity before you? Have you no ambition? Will you permit Herzovinia to be robbed of what naturally belongs to her? We have worked long and spilled Herzovinian blood in order to acquire these beautiful rich islands. And with the end in sight will you resign?"

Mr. Carlson roused himself from his dejection.

"I agreed with the other consuls to try to prevent a war. Cannot we succeed without bloodshed? I don't believe the foreign office really wishes that."

Count Rosen's eyes flashed.

"What are these puny wars to our statesmen?" he asked. "Has anything worth while ever been attained without the shed-

ding of blood? But," he added, "you were about to tell me of some important news."

"I have reliable information that a letter has been received by Judge Lindsay, written some years ago by our government, which demands that Kataafa shall never be king," Mr. Carlson said earnestly. "I knew of the letter, but believed it was withdrawn when England and America refused to agree."

"It was never withdrawn," Count Rosen replied. "The chief justice then will decide for this foolish boy Panu-Mafili. That decision must bring on a war."

Mr. Carlson looked surprised, his round red face a picture of timid anxiety. "Kataafa will break his oath?" he questioned aghast.

"Of course, and now for the political side of this issue," the count nodded and continued. "Under the treaty the three consuls must act in concert to uphold the decisions of the chief justice. Will you, knowing the aim of your government and loving the natives as your friends, give your support to such a wicked decision? Will you call for your sailors and force upon these honest, childlike natives a king not of their choosing?"

Mr. Carlson glanced up appealingly. "Count," he exclaimed, "what would you do if you were in my place?"

Count Rosen smiled enigmatically. "Mr. Carlson," he replied, "I have no credentials. I have been sent by our foreign office to study the situation in the South Seas. At Fiji I received a letter to go to Ukula. I am here. Advice without responsibility is not good. You must decide for yourself, for you alone are responsible for your acts to our government. I can, however, show you," he added earnestly, "how the situation will develop if you continue to act in harmony with the other consuls in upholding the decision, if it is against Kataafa. The natives will arm and fight. The Kataafa warriors are in vastly superior numbers and will soon win a victory. The sailors of three nations will be landed to fight the victorious side. With their superior guns and training many innocent natives must be killed. It would then be a general war, the whites against the natives."

"And if I refuse to stand with the others?" the consul asked earnestly.

"That will greatly simplify everything,"

the count replied. "The Kataafa warriors would declare him king. The Panu natives in such great inferiority of numbers cannot resist except with the aid of the sailors, and that could not be given as long as you refuse to join. The treaty distinctly stipulates that action may be taken unanimously. There would be no war. The next mail from home would bring the recall of this partial judge. Kataafa would remain king, and then he must soon seek annexation to our Herzovinia. I hope to see our flag hoisted over the Kapuan Islands. And of course," he added, "you will get all the credit. The order of the Black Eagle will be yours."

The consul's face was now fairly beaming upon this kind prophet.

"My mind is made up," he said. "I shall refuse to be used by those who have only selfish aims. I shall write and refuse to agree with the other consuls."

Count Rosen smiled triumphantly as he rode his pony along the main road of Ukula.

"Carlson has been here too long," he said to himself. "He thinks there's nothing beyond his narrow horizon. His lonesome life

has made him timid; he needed stirring to life. Herzovinia's aims must be kept always before us. Our statesmen decided years ago to own these islands. Our money is invested here and they are a link in our colonial chain. A war! a little bloodshed! What does it matter?"

At the Kapuan firm's store the count dismounted, giving his pony in care of a native.

Klinger, the manager, met him at the doorstep. No word was spoken until they reached the office in the rear of the store and the door closed behind them.

"I see in your face you are successful," Klinger said as the count took the proffered chair.

"Everything so far has been wonderful," the count exclaimed. "Judge Lindsay will give the decision to Panu, Kataafa will revolt, and Carlson will refuse to do anything. The hands of our friends the enemy are tied."

"I too have news," Klinger said. "Kataafa has bought all the guns coming in the 'Talofa.' Also he has answered Judge Lindsay's letter, that he cannot agree to give his word to remain peaceful if the decision is against him,

as he considers the right to be king is his, and he has already been acknowledged king by one power. What do you think of that?" he asked delightedly.

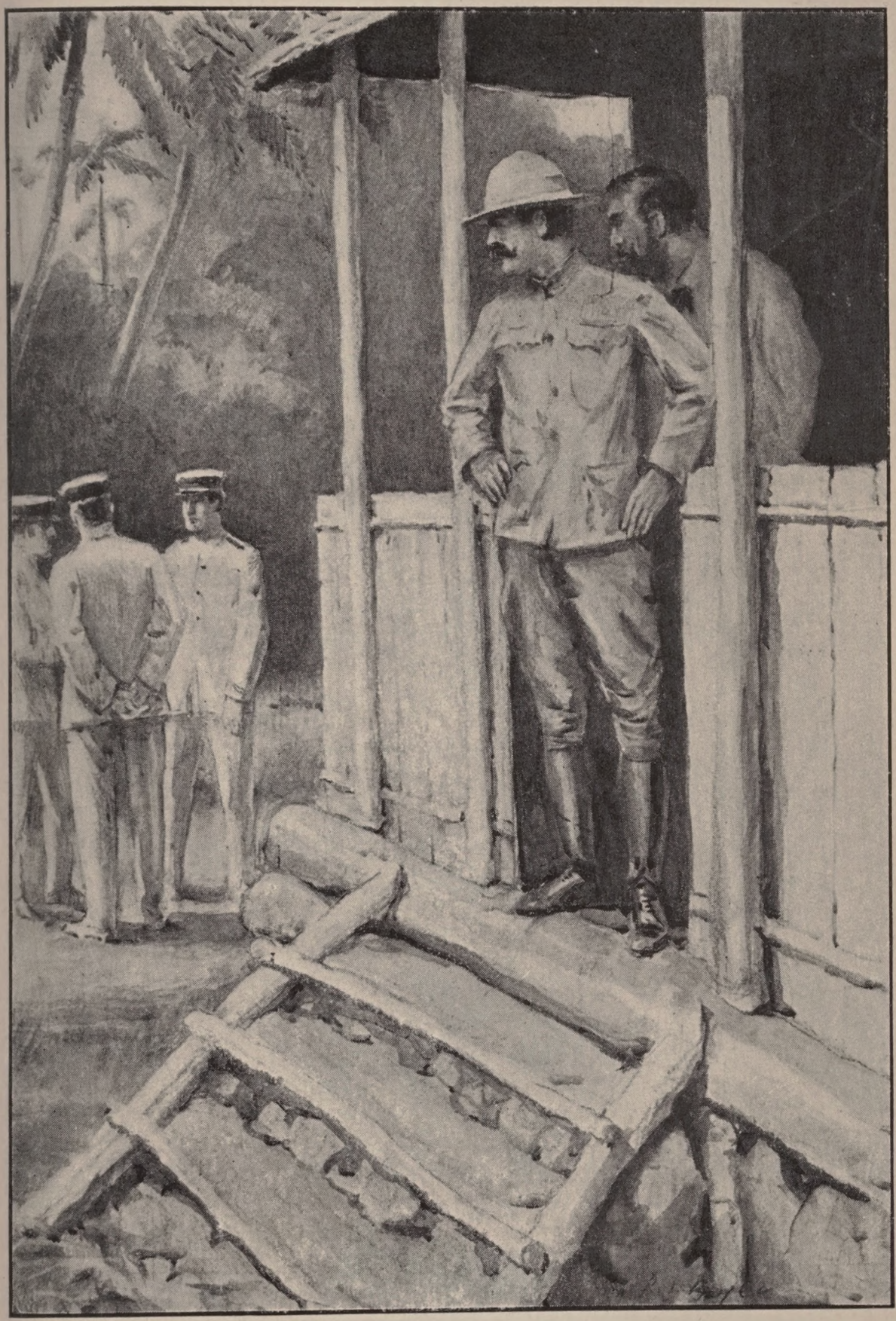
"I saw Kataafa to-day and he says he is anxious for annexation to Herzovinia," Klinger continued. "The Americans, you know, have acquired title to land in the harbor of Tua-Tua on the island of Kulila. That must be broken up."

The count nodded. "Go ahead, you have a free rein. And now what about the whereabouts of our friend Captain 'Bully' Scott?"

"I am looking for him daily," Klinger replied. "He is bringing enough guns to arm every Kataafa warrior. All day long I have been getting receipts from the natives for guns to be delivered."

"Always an eye for business," the count exclaimed in half jesting disgust. "You merchants own these poor natives body and soul."

"What would you have us do?" Klinger answered defensively. "I have spent many thousands of dollars upon these rifles. I am taking great risks in getting them here, for if



THREE AMERICAN OFFICERS WERE STANDING IN THE ROAD

either of the war-ships seize them they will be confiscated under the treaty, and I have no redress. And, count," he added, "you know it is all for our country."

Count Rosen nodded his head, but his steel gray eyes looked squarely into those of the manager of the Kapuan firm until the latter's fell in quick embarrassment. The count knew that the man's natural cupidity was a large measure of the driving force stimulating his patriotic enthusiasm.

"There's nothing to do but wait," the count said as they reached the door of the store.

Three American officers were standing in the road at the front.

"The American commander will have to be handled carefully," the count said in a low voice to Klinger, as he turned his back upon the officers. "He's a fine type; I can see it in his face. He'd make a stanch friend, but a difficult enemy." This last to himself. Sentiment was wasted upon the selfish manager of a grasping firm.

"I must contrive to know him," the count added aloud.

The American officers had now continued along the road.

"Don't be too precipitate," the count cautioned as he whistled to the native boy, holding his pony's bridle.

The count mounted his pony, walking it slowly down the road. At the Tivoli Hotel he stopped and dismounted. Within a half hour he walked from the hotel, carefully dressed in a spotless white linen suit and helmet. He turned his steps toward Matautu.

He turned in at the American consulate gate, and walked with an air of high bred assurance up the steps of the porch.

Mr. Lee arose to receive him, a frank smile of cordiality upon his face.

"Count Felix Rosen." The visitor pronounced his name slowly; there was the smallest of accents. "I have come to pay my respects," he said quietly. "We tourists often forget our social duties."

"It is I who should apologize, Count Rosen," Mr. Lee exclaimed, introducing the visitor to his daughter and Commander Tazewell. "You have been in Ukula for several days, and I should have called

upon you and bid you welcome to our little island."

"Truly, sir, I should not expect you to take so much trouble," the count returned suavely. "I am but a globe-trotter, as you say in America. I have no aim, no business. I go where I may be amused."

The count accepted the cup of tea offered him by Miss Lee and sipped it meditatively. He felt the awkward silence and hastened to relieve it.

"My time here is likely to be so short," he added, "that I hope if there must be war among the natives they will wait until after I can explore the islands. In my few days I have ridden miles and have been everywhere charmed with the natural beauty of the country and the charming hospitality of the natives."

"We also, count, are hoping that there will be no war," Mr. Lee replied. "And if your consul will stand with the British consul and myself it can be averted."

"So!" the count exclaimed surprisedly. "Does Mr. Carlson then desire a war? Sometimes I lose all patience with my stubborn

countryman. It is very strange," he added. "I lunched with him to-day and he seemed aggrieved that you and the British consul would not support him to prevent a war."

Commander Tazewell had been carefully studying the speaker's face. He read there only disinterested amusement over the situation. What business could this cultured Herzovinian have with Klinger? He decided to endeavor to find out.

"Most of the disturbances among the natives," Commander Tazewell said quietly, "are brought about by the merchants. Arms, you know, Count Rosen, are merchandise upon which an enormous profit is realized. A war, though, is required to create a market. I believe that Mr. Klinger could allay your uneasiness over the possibility of a war more certainly than can either of the consuls."

The count raised his eyes slowly to the speaker's face. Their eyes met and for a moment each gauged the other. The count shifted his gaze first; a faint suspicion of a flush had come under his tanned cheeks.

"Klinger has been good enough to arrange some trips for me into the interior of the

island," the count explained quickly. "I was arranging details with him for a trip to the Papasea,[1] the sliding rock, when you passed his store." A smile of delight spread over his handsome face as he suddenly asked: "Can't we make up a party for that trip? I should be charmed to play host. But," he added, "I suppose with you it is an old story."

Mr. Lee declined for himself. The uncertainty of the situation demanded his continuous presence in Ukula.

After some discussion it was arranged that the party start the next morning. Alice and the midshipmen returned in time to be included, together with Commander Tazewell and Miss Lee.

"I cannot express to you the honor you have done me in accepting my invitation," the count exclaimed, as he bade good-bye. "This morning I was a lonesome stranger, and now I am rich in friends."

"Who is he?" Commander Tazewell asked the consul as his straight figure passed out of sight down the road.

[1] Papasea—A waterfall.

Mr. Lee shook his head.

"Some well connected Herzovinian of the smaller nobility, I suppose," he replied. "His consul called upon him almost at once after he arrived on the last steamer from the South. A title carries a great deal of dignity with it."

"He is certainly very fine looking," Miss Lee said admiringly.

"And knows how to talk," Phil added.

"I believe he is a past master in the art of talk," Alice said pointedly. "And the worst of it is we know what he says and not what he means."

All laughed at the girl's quaint mode of expression.

"Call me silly and a rebel all you please," she added turning upon her sister, who at once denied even the thought of any such accusation, "but I am and always will be suspicious of a Herzovinian in Kapua. Anywhere else he may be honest and mean what he says, but here, no!" She shook her head vigorously.

While the two midshipmen with Commander Tazewell were returning in the captain's gig to the "Sitka," Phil spoke of the

sailing vessel they had seen from Alice's "lookout."

"Probably it isn't Captain Scott's 'Talofa,'" he added deprecatingly. "It was too far away to see anything but the tops of her sails."

Commander Tazewell listened earnestly.

"'Bully' Scott is usually on hand where there is a chance for his nefarious trade in guns," he replied. "Miss Alice Lee may have no real grounds for her belief that it is the 'Talofa,' but that young girl is more than usually clever for one of her age, and her father tells me she is worshiped by the native women, to whom she is a veritable administering angel. Tuamana's daughter, Avao, is her particular friend. You know," he added, "in Kapua, the women are the tale bearers; no bit of interesting news escapes them."

CHAPTER IV

CAPTAIN "BULLY" SCOTT AND HIS MATE

CAPTAIN "BULLY" SCOTT sat comfortably on the combing of the after deck house and gazed toward the high mountain ranges of the islands of Kapua. The land had been in sight all day, but the fitful breeze was hardly enough to hold the "Talofa's" great expanse of canvas out taut against the sheets. Yet even the light breeze drove the schooner faster than the captain wished to travel.

"Bring her up another point," he directed, in a well modulated, almost cultivated voice.

The helmsman, a Fiji Islander, a strapping bronze skinned native, naked except for the loin cloth of tapa, eased down his helm until the great sails flapped idly.

"Mr. Stump," the captain called down the hatch.

A middle-sized, wizened man stuck his head up above the deck in answer.

"Mr. Stump, I'll thank you to invite our passengers down to their staterooms and put the hatch cover on and lock it," Captain Scott said politely. "It'll be dark in another half hour, and then we'll 'bear up' and run in to close with the land."

Benjamin Stump nodded his head in reply and turned on his heel to go forward. This was a daily occurrence. Captain Scott had learned to secure his human cargo at night. A mutiny that came near ending fatally to him had taught him this lesson.

"Oh, Stump!" Captain Scott raised his voice to be heard above the lapping of the water and the noise of shaking canvas. "I hope our disagreement at Suva[1] is all forgotten by now. You can't afford to fall out with me, Stump," he added menacingly after the man had returned and lolled against the shrouds of the main rigging. "There's that little affair at the Ellice Islands and the deal in Tahiti; and besides, Stump, you know that black boy on our last manifest didn't really fall overboard."

Stump's knees shook imperceptibly while

[1] Suva—A town in the Fiji.

his thin claw-like fingers worked convulsively. His uncouth mind had not forgotten the matter. He had remembered it, lived with the remembrance every day of the thirty since leaving the Fijis; and had nursed his desire for revenge against his captain and benefactor.

"Captain Scott, you hadn't any call to do what you did," he said doggedly. "Those people were my friends, and righteous people too. They believed the story I told 'em. They gave me human sympathy, and I was downright sorry I wasn't what I said I was. I was afeared to tell them the truth. They took me to prayer-meetings and prayed for my soul and one of the young ladies begged me to go home to my old parents and be forgiven."

Captain Scott suddenly leaned back in his seat and roared with uncontrolled laughter.

"You impious rascal!" he exclaimed. "Do you suppose I could permit you to impose upon my friends with any such tales? I picked you up in Shanghai, do you remember? You either had to go with me or to the consular jail for being too light

fingered with other people's money. You told me your parents were dead ; and besides, that young lady was getting too sorry for you for both her good and yours."

Stump's weasel eyes flashed angrily.

"You might have split on me differently," he said. "That girl's accusing eyes hurt me every time I think of it."

Captain Scott stifled his merriment.

"I'm really sorry, Stump," he said. "You and I have been together a long time, and sometimes maybe I don't understand you as I should. Sentiment is new to you. This trip is going to give us a rich haul, and I'm going to give you an extra hundred dollars just to square your injured vanity."

Captain Scott watched the lean figure as it ambled forward. He saw him herd together the score of black Solomon Islanders, brought to sell into slavery on the plantations of the Kupuan firm. After all had descended into the dark stuffy forehold, Stump, with the help of a couple of the Fiji crew, put on the hatch cover and locked it. The only air for the prisoners was admitted through two small ventilators in the deck.

"Stump's acting queerly this trip," Captain Scott said thoughtfully to himself. "Appears to be considering jumping the game. It won't do," he exclaimed. "He knows too much about yours truly. Nice gratitude, I call it, after I saved him from a Chinese prison."

Stump walked aimlessly aft and leaned indolently against the rail. His face wore a frown.

"What in blazes is the matter with you, anyway?" Captain Scott exclaimed. "Your face has been as long this trip as a Fiji widow's. You know me well enough by this time to understand that sort of grump don't go with me. If you don't cultivate a little more pleasantry, I'll have to dispense with your company, no matter how necessary it has been."

Stump gained a measure of confidence in the knowledge of war-ships in the harbor of Ukula, not over twelve miles distant. The very tops of their lofty spars could indistinctly be seen against the dark green background of the island.

"I have been considering cutting out this here kind of life," he replied. "That girl in

Suva made me hanker after going back to my own folks. I haven't heard of them for nearly ten years."

A sinister look came into Captain Scott's cold gray eyes. Stump was not only a useful man, but he shared too many of the schooner's dark secrets. A way must be found to shake these sentimental longings loose from Stump's mind.

"Some day," he returned suavely, "we'll make a trip with the 'Talofa' up to 'Frisco' and turn over a new page in our life. You are just down on your luck now, Stump," he added kindly. "That will all pass away when you get ashore among your old cronies on the beach at Ukula."

In Stump's mind a battle was being waged. He was not naturally a bad man, but was weak in character. He had run away from home when he was only a lad, and the years he had spent upon the sea had only brought him lower in the human scale. Hard knocks and brutality had been showered upon him. He was by nature shiftless and lazy. No one had ever taken the trouble to show him the error of his ways. Captain Scott had used him because he could bend him to his will.

The many unlawful acts he had committed were at the instigation of his benefactor. Stump was not a coward. He had proved his fearlessness during many fights with the savages of the black islands to the southward where the "Talofa" had gone to steal the inhabitants to sell them in the labor markets of the South Seas. Captain Scott he did fear. He feared his cold, calculating but nevertheless diabolical temper, backed by a physical strength almost superhuman. Ever since leaving Suva, Stump had been brooding over his misdeeds. Now he must finally make up his mind. He wanted to get clear of the life he now hated. He wanted to be free of the fear of being arrested and put behind prison bars. He wanted to part forever from the man he so much feared. He was not entirely ungrateful, nor did he harbor extreme revenge against Captain Scott. Yet if he opposed him, he must, to succeed, betray him into the hands of the law even if by so doing he arrived there himself.

After dark the "Talofa" was put under more canvas and headed upon a compass course set by the captain.

An hour later Captain Scott and his mate, Stump, stood again together near the wheel. There were no lights except a dim lantern set in a deck bucket.

"Stump," the captain said pleasantly, "how'd you like to be captain of the 'Talofa'?"

The mate glanced up in surprise.

"You'll have to be taught navigation," the captain added. "That's most all you need. A little chart reading and practice in picking your way among the reefs."

"I navigated the 'Pango' from the Ellice Islands to Strong Island," Stump reminded him.

"So you did," Captain Scott replied.

"Well, maybe you'll do," he added, after a slight pause. He took the lantern out of the bucket and held it over the chart of the Kapuan Islands. Then he handed the lantern to Stump.

"Hold this," he directed, "and I'll give you a lesson in navigating."

With parallel rulers, dividers and pencil, the captain laid down a line from a position he had made on the chart; then he trans-

ferred the line with the parallel rulers to the compass printed on the chart, and read the compass direction of the line.

"There's where I figured we were at dark," he said to the attentive Stump. "There's the entrance to the reef at Saluafata, and that's our compass course. Southeast, I make it." Then he stepped off the distance with the dividers. "Fifteen miles it is." He glanced over the side and then up at the slack canvas. "I guess we're making about four knots, so about eleven o'clock we should be hearing the surf on the reef."

Captain Scott took the lantern and again placed it within the bucket.

"I reckon I can navigate," Stump said to himself. High hopes came into his mind, and if Captain Scott could have read them he would not have been so sure of winning back Stump's friendship. The mate's thoughts had at first been upon Suva, and his desire to go back and square himself with the people before whom Captain Scott had humiliated him. Especially, Stump had wanted to tell the young girl who had tried to make him a better man that she had done him some good.

Once the captain of the "Talofa," he could try to be a better man. That in accepting such a position in command of a vessel owned by Captain Scott, he would be unable to cast off his old life, did not occur to him. In fact Stump did not consider as crimes the many acts they had committed, and were committing. To Stump a thing was a crime only when the perpetrator was caught in the act and put in jail. Stump knew that he owed his immunity to Captain Scott. Once in Suva without the captain, Stump thought he could square himself with the girl, and incidentally get even with Captain Scott.

As he took the lantern from Stump, Scott held it up for an instant and observed his mate's face. What he saw there did not seem to worry him. "I guess that offer will keep his tongue quiet," he mused. "With an American war-ship in port, Stump's apt to meet some friends ashore and say too much."

"Hold her on this course, Mr. Stump," the captain said officially. "I'm going to turn in for forty winks. You can call me at ten o'clock, and then get the crew all up on deck." Stump grunted and leaned over to look at the

compass. He saw the lubber's point was on the course the captain had figured out from the chart. Captain Scott descended the ladder to the cabin.

Stump suddenly took up the lantern and placed it on the covered chart table. With the dividers he measured off a distance on the black line the captain had drawn and then with the rulers he took off a course to another point on the island.

"South by east," he exclaimed in an undertone. "Twelve miles to Ukula harbor. We could do it in two hours at this speed." He glanced aloft. The canvas was drawing well, the booms lying about three points on the lee quarter. The wind was at east northeast. The ship was heading southeast, and therefore about two points "free." South by east would bring the wind one point abaft the weather beam.

Stump, after satisfying himself of the feasibility of his suddenly conceived plan, proceeded to put it into execution. Picking his way across the sleeping forms on the deck, he made his way forward to the galley, where the blacksmith's forge was lashed. That day

he had been at work making a weld of wrought steel to replace a spreader for the topmast backstays. With this bar of steel in his hands, he glanced into the galley. It was empty, but the coffee kettle, still hot, was on the stove. As he poured himself a cup, he ran over in his mind the risk he was taking. His timid soul quailed. Had he the courage to carry through this bold plan of revenge? In the harbor of Ukula Captain Scott had said was a Yankee man-of-war. To bring the notorious "Bully" Scott into the arms of the law, red handed, with black boys and guns for the natives, would be a stroke of diplomacy which would bring fame to the name of Benjamin Stump throughout all the South Sea Islands. A better reward than the command of the "Talofa"! Once Scott was behind the jail bars, convicted of a felony, all his black career would be told by those who would no longer fear to tell the truth. The girl in Suva would hear of it, and would believe her advice had influenced him to bring to justice this sheep in wolf's clothing, the bold schemer who made others do his evil work.

"Thinks I ain't on to navigation," he

chuckled. "Wasn't in an iron war-ship for nothing and helped the navigator to make magnets out of steel bars to fix his compass.

"I don't owe him anything," he added, when his conscience troubled him as he remembered how Captain Scott had paid his fine at Shanghai. "He's gotten his money's worth out of me, long ago. The score's on my side now. I'd rather go to jail anyway than to sail with him longer. I swore I'd kill him when I got a chance after he broke my arm with that belaying-pin. He can't prove nothing against me; that Solomon Islander was accidentally drowned, and the other things he knows of—— Well, I'm sick of being treated like a dog, and that's the end of it."

The warm coffee revived his waning courage, and determinedly he started aft to the wheel. He laid his steel bar against the rail and took his stand behind the helmsman.

"There's a pot of coffee on the galley," he said to Mata, the half-breed Fijian quartermaster. "I'll mind the wheel while you get a cup." He had no fear that the man would refuse.

Mata turned over the wheel to Stump with

alacrity, and with a grunt of thanks disappeared forward.

Now was his chance. He was not quite sure that the plan would work. He did not understand the science of magnetic attraction. He was only following blindly what he had seen the American naval officer do some years before.

His frame trembling with nervous eagerness, he eased the helm spoke by spoke. The "Talofa" pitched and rolled more heavily as her bow turned farther from the wind. Then Stump was fearful lest the wind might be shifting and might catch the sails aback and jibe the heavy booms, thus carrying away the sheets. At south by east he steadied. A bright star almost directly ahead was just visible along the line of the two masts. Disregarding the compass he steered for the star, taking a last glance at the compass. It still read south by east. To reach out and secure the bar of steel was accomplished in a second. He put it alongside the binnacle. The compass swung slowly away and came to rest within a point of the old course. He raised the bar and brought it closer against the

wooden binnacle. The course was within a few degrees of the one the captain had set. Releasing the helm for an instant he tied the bar securely to the binnacle. The sails shivered and the mainsail gave one loud flap that brought Mata in sudden haste to his side.

"The breeze's been hauling astern," Stump said, "and those booms are uneasy."

Mata took the wheel. Glancing quickly into the compass bowl, he saw the course was correct.

"I'll ease off the sheets; it'll make her lie easy," Stump explained, as he hurried away to carry out his intention. He was filled with joyous apprehension—joyful at the success of his plan, but apprehensive that it would be discovered. He eased off the main fore and jib sheets until the sails were spanking full, giving more speed, then he walked, with apparent unconcern, back to the wheel.

"Getting in near the land, I reckon," he said. "Wind's apt to blow different in there."

Mata seemed puzzled, but his untrained mind could not conceive that everything was else but natural. A sudden change of wind meant to him the approach of a storm, but the

sky showed no evidence, nor did the barometer which he had read not an hour ago.

As near as Stump could figure the schooner was now approaching Ukula harbor at a speed of nearly six knots.

An hour passed. Then Stump grew restless. Taking off his shoes he tiptoed down the companion ladder to the cabin. All there was in darkness. He listened. He could hear the captain's regular breathing. He was asleep. Turning to steal back his foot encountered an obstruction, and he fell heavily on the deck.

"Is that you, Stump?" Captain Scott asked, suddenly awaking. "Is it ten already?"

"'Tain't much past two bells," Stump hastened to answer. "Wind's hauling to northward. I was a-going to tell you if you were awake."

The captain grunted. Stump waited in silence. No answer. The captain was again asleep. Stump moved, this time more cautiously, up the hatch.

The night was dark. The sky, brilliant with stars, accentuated the shrouded deep. Undefined shadowy shapes above the southern

horizon Stump knew to be the high mountain range of the islands of Ukula.

Within an hour's time lights made their appearance. As time wore on more and more lights sprang up from the sea. Stump, despite the fear of his master's vengeance, smiled grimly. These lights were in the town of Ukula and on board the anchored war-ships. The "Talofa" was being drawn as by a loadstone to its deserved retribution.

The lights came nearer. Stump glanced anxiously at the clock inside the companion hatch. The hands pointed to quarter past nine o'clock. Now he thought he could hear the thunder of the surf beating upon the reef.

Mata seemed wrapped in characteristic native reserve. If he saw the lights ahead, he considered them not his concern.

"Fishing on the reef at Saluafata," Stump said finally to relieve the tension on his own nerves.

Mata gazed fixedly at the lights for nearly a minute.

"Ukula," he exclaimed, nodding his head in that direction. "More better you speak cap'n."

"It can't be Ukula," Stump exclaimed, his voice feigning surprise at the suggestion.

"Big reef, plenty sharks. Cap'n Scott smell the channel, you no can see." Mata gave his advice in short sentences.

As the "Talofa" approached, Stump's nerve began to fail him. To wreck the schooner was more than he contemplated, yet if Mata could recognize Ukula, Captain Scott surely would at the first glance and defeat the plan. To call Captain Scott now would end in putting the schooner about and steering out to sea. Stump then would have risked his captain's anger for no end. The would-be navigator had been confident that he could find the narrow entrance between the reefs, but with the glare of lights in his eyes, his mind was in utter bewilderment. He was in momentary terror of hearing the roar of the surf under the "Talofa's" bow and the grinding of her keel on the treacherous reef.

"Shark," Mata exclaimed pointing to a monster black fin, traveling along near at hand to leeward of the schooner.

Stump was seized with a sudden wild panic. His motor nerves became paralyzed. The

confusion of lights and the ever increasing roar of the surf caused his knees to tremble and his heart to almost stop beating. A voice behind him, which a few minutes earlier would have brought terror to his soul, now fell like sweet music upon his ear.

"What's the meaning of this, Mr. Stump?" Captain Scott's tone, though quiet, betrayed great concern. "Shorten sail, sir!" he shouted. "We must be nearly on the reef." Then of a sudden the situation dawned upon Captain Scott. Stump was energetically kicking the sleeping sailors to wakefulness, bawling out his orders to "let go the gear" and "man the down-hauls."

"Great guns!" the captain cried aghast. "It's Ukula."

Mata grunted an affirmative.

"Bear a hand there." Captain Scott's voice could be heard above the thunder of flapping canvas. "Douse everything. Get this speed off her." He glanced anxiously into the compass; the schooner was on her course.

"Compass gone plumb crazy," he exclaimed. "You've got a jack-knife on!" He turned savagely upon the helmsman, feeling for the

knife usually carried on a lanyard about the waist, but Mata was not guilty of this great nautical misdemeanor.

In but a few minutes the nimble crew had gotten all sail off the schooner, yet the fresh breeze still carried her toward the harbor.

"Mr. Stump, out on the bowsprit with you," the captain ordered. He himself had gone to the forecastle, directing in his clear, far-reaching voice the helmsman at the wheel aft.

A white, specter-like line suddenly appeared close aboard, ahead and to starboard.

Captain Scott was now full master of the situation. To the left of the line of breakers was deep water.

"Starboard your helm," he cried. Then, "Steady so." The "Talofa's" bow was heading between two long lines of surf, while ahead were the lights of a large vessel, and between her and the schooner, Captain Scott could see, was deep water.

As they drew nearer the vessel took shape out of the darkness.

"Ship ahoy," a hoarse voice hailed the "Talofa."

Captain Scott purposely waited a repetition

of the challenge. He was thinking deeply. The silhouette of the war-ship bore nearly abeam. If he gave the schooner's right name he would stand a better chance of weathering the visit from the war-ship which would be made when he anchored. Subterfuge would only lessen his chances. It had been too late when he had come on deck to put the vessel about and seek safety. The reef was too close aboard. Now, once inside the harbor, to turn and head out to sea would put his vessel under suspicion, and a search-light in combination with a few shells would bring him back.

"The 'Talofa' schooner from Fiji, Captain Scott in command," he answered, loud and distinctly. "What ship is that?"

"The United States Cruiser 'Sitka,'" came the answering hail.

The shrill notes of a boatswain's pipe on board the war-ship, followed by a deep throated call and a hurry of shod feet, came distinctly across the water.

The "Talofa" forged slowly ahead. Her bow was swung to port as she nosed her way into the inner harbor.

"Let go the anchor," Captain Scott cried out disgustedly, and as the chain rattled out, he quietly walked forward and directed the sailor tending it to "haul to and secure." Then he called in Stump, still sitting inert on the bowsprit end.

"A nice mess you've made of it," he said through shut jaws. Stump crawled in slowly, stopping just out of arm's reach. As agile as a cat, Captain Scott suddenly cleared the distance and his strong hand seized the shrinking mate by the scruff of the neck. He shook him until his bones rattled.

"Out with it," he exclaimed. His voice to Stump had the tone of rusty files. "How did it happen? What did you do to the compass?"

Stump saw no avenue of escape. The uncanniness of Captain Scott's intuition awed him to his resolve for truthfulness.

"A boat's alongside," Stump sputtered as his shifting and terrified gaze caught sight of a shadowy form in the water making the side of the schooner. The diversion was timely for the trembling Stump. Captain Scott released his hold, but the guilty mate, off his

guard, received the full force of Captain Scott's iron fist squarely under the jaws. His body bent limply backward and fell heavily upon the deck, where it lay motionless, while Captain Scott strolled unconcernedly aft to receive his visitors.

CHAPTER V

THE "TALOFA" IN UKULA

AFTER dinner all the officers of the "Sitka," as was the custom, took chairs upon the quarter-deck. Phil and Sydney, having finished their unpacking, had joined the circle. The subject of conversation was the course of local events. All looked forward with ill concealed delight at the prospects of active service.

"These natives are great fighters," Ensign Patterson exclaimed admiringly, "only they don't know the rules of the game. A few hundred white men could hold their own against as many thousand."

"Don't bank too much on that argument if you are lucky enough to command a company of sailors ashore," Lieutenant Sargeant returned thoughtfully. "The Herzovinian sailors some years ago were defeated and many killed because their leader under-

rated the soldierly ability of the Kapuan warrior."

"It's certainly a travesty on our civilization." The doctor joined in the general conversation. "Here are three war-ships, each with a couple of hundred good rifle shots. There are probably all told ten thousand warriors in the islands. As far as I can learn, two of these war-ships are pulling for Panu-Mafili and one for Kataafa. If we all three got together and told the natives to go peaceably to their homes, and then if we proceeded to quietly decide to agree upon something—well, useless spilling of blood could be averted, at any rate."

"The trouble with your argument is, doctor," Lieutenant Sargeant replied, "that it's too far up in the clouds. Remember we're all human and living on the earth together. All three nations covet these islands. Some day one will get them, so the question is simply which?"

"Why should we be interested?" Phil inquired modestly. "We have no trade here, and but a handful of our countrymen live in the islands."

"And most of them," Lieutenant Sargeant replied, "are people one cannot be proud to acknowledge. But our real interest is to get a coaling station here. Tua-Tua is a fine land-locked harbor, and is on the steamer route from both San Francisco and Panama to New Zealand and Australia. Herzovinia may have all the rest if we can hold the island of Kulila with the harbor of Tua-Tua. That's why we have a war-ship here."

"What does England want out of it?" Ensign Patterson inquired.

"England," Lieutenant Sargeant answered, "is interested to see that Herzovinia does not grab too much. Through England's help we may be able to get Tua-Tua; without it, against the Herzovinian diplomacy, we should get nothing."

"The natives of Kapua stand to lose in any case," Sydney remarked. "I for one would like to see the natives remain independent, and hope that this will be the time when all hands 'bust' in their calculations."

The captain of the British cruiser had been paying a visit to Commander Tazewell, and Phil, on duty as junior officer of the watch,

was called upon an hour later to see that the English captain's gig was manned for him at the gangway.

The two commanders stood in the shadow of the poop-deck conversing in low, serious tones. Phil had found that the boat was ready alongside and had advanced to report. The figure of a man, also in the shadow, his body bent forward in a listening attitude, caught his eye. Phil stopped, and at once the man drew back and walked silently away. Phil crossed over to investigate the identity of the evident eavesdropper. Suddenly from the gloom of the deck the captain's orderly appeared.

"Were you looking for me, sir?" the sailor said respectfully.

Phil hesitated. He was on the point of denouncing him as an eavesdropper.

"I thought I heard you call, sir," the sailor added apologetically. "I was on a message forward for the captain."

"Yes, report to the captain that the English gig is at the gangway," Phil ordered. The midshipman decided he had confronted the wrong man. "Did you pass any

one as you came aft?" he asked as an afterthought.

"Yes, sir," the orderly replied readily. "Just there a man passed going forward. I took him for one of the electrical gang. He came out of the cabin, I think."

The orderly crossed the deck, saluted stiffly and made his report. The two captains walked slowly toward the gangway. Phil took his place to the left of the regular officer of the deck.

"Good-night," the Englishman said, his hand to his cap. "You'll find us ready when you say the word, Tazewell," he added in a loud aside as he briskly descended the ladder to his boat.

Phil hesitated whether to tell the captain of his suspicions. The man might have been an electrician, as the orderly had said. Phil crossed over to the exact spot where he had seen the man stand and tried to strike the same attitude. An electric globe light fixture was above his head, but it was not lighted. He reached up and turned the switch. The light did not burn. That was why the deck there was in shadow. The man must have

been an electrician who was examining the fixture. The thing was so simple that Phil tried to dismiss the incident from his mind.

"What is that orderly's name?" he asked of the boatswain's mate of the watch.

"Schultz," Boatswain's Mate O'Neil replied. "He's a 'sea-lawyer'[1] too, Mr. Perry. Ain't worth his ration of 'salt-horse'[2] either."

"Then why does the captain keep him as his orderly?" Phil asked.

"Search me, sir, except he's a good parrot for messages," O'Neil suggested. "An orderly, you know, sir, hasn't any use for brains. He's just telegraph wire."

Phil smiled at O'Neil's analogy.

"Schultz," he thought. "I'd feel surer that it wasn't he if his name had suggested some other nationality. But then there are a lot of such names in our navy."

Other and more stirring incidents drove Schultz from Phil's mind.

Phil and the officer of the deck, Lieutenant Morrison, were pacing the quarter-deck scarcely twenty minutes later. The older officer was one to whom the midshipman had immediately

[1] Sea-lawyer—A sailor socialist. [2] Salt-horse—Salt pork.

taken a great fancy. He was a man of strong character and even temper, and probably ten years the lad's senior in both age and experience.

"It looks as if the Kapuan volcano were going to erupt again, Mr. Perry," he said in his quiet, thoughtful way. "There's been peace among the natives for nearly five years, and they are in prime condition to be stirred into a war. The triple government has succeeded under a strong native king. The dead monarch, Laupepe, was really a highly educated savage. Now there is only one native with sufficient influence to avert a war, and he is too partial to Herzovinia to be acceptable to either our country or England. You know we have our eye on Tua-Tua as a coaling station, and if Kataafa becomes king our opportunity of acquiring that harbor will vanish in smoke."

"Do you believe there will be a war?" Phil asked eagerly. "Will the sailors be landed to fight against the natives?"

"It's been done before," Lieutenant Morrison replied. "It really seems a heartless thing to do, but that is the only means of

enforcing your will on a savage. Force is the only argument he understands. Kataafa has established his government at Kulinuu Point, you know, and sent out word to all the islands for his adherents to gather. It's unlikely that he will give in peaceably if the chief justice's decision is against him. Of course it is no secret who is supporting him in his attitude. The Kapuan firm under Klinger is his banker."

"There's a sailing vessel just beyond the breakers, sir," the quartermaster on watch reported from the after bridge. "She's not carrying lights and seems to be heading for the entrance."

Both officers strained their eyes in an endeavor to make out more plainly a dim shape which the quartermaster's trained eyes had discovered. Phil's thoughts went back at once to the schooner seen from Alice's Mission Hill, far out on the ocean.

"Only a trading schooner," Lieutenant Morrison pronounced as he focussed his night binoculars upon the ill-defined silhouette of a large schooner under full canvas. "By George, she's coming through in yachtsman's style.

Not a sheet started, in a stiff breeze too, and not five hundred yards from the reef.

"There! She shortens sail," he exclaimed admiringly. "Her skipper knows the harbor, that's certain, or he wouldn't be taking such chances."

The sailing vessel was plainly seen to take in all her sails almost at the same time, and the next minute she was in the narrow channel between the barrier reefs upon which the sea was breaking heavily.

"Can it be the 'Talofa'?" Phil asked excitedly. "Captain 'Bully' Scott's ship?"

Lieutenant Morrison had sent word to the captain of the arrival of a strange sail, and now he waited her nearer approach to "hail" her.

Twice the lieutenant's hail of inquiry was ignored. The schooner was now abreast, her speed materially decreased, yet still traveling smartly through the water.

"The 'Talofa' schooner from Fiji, Captain Scott in command." The answer was bold and distinct.

"By Jove! How did you guess it?" the lieutenant exclaimed. Then he answered the "Talofa's" inquiry.

Commander Tazewell had come up from below and stood at the side of the officer of the deck.

"Let Mr. Perry board her," he ordered quietly, and as the officer of the deck moved away to give the boatswain's mate the order to call away the running boat, Commander Tazewell gave Phil some instructions as to his conduct to the captain of the merchant ship.

"Scott disclaims American nationality," he said. "I hear he now flies the Herzovinian flag. You must go on board under the impression that he is an American and therefore under the control of our consul while in the harbor. Ask him of what his cargo consists. I must leave the rest to your good judgment."

Commander Tazewell waited until he heard the rattle of anchor chain as the schooner anchored, then returned to his cabin, while Phil took command of the boat.

"To the schooner," he said, turning to the sailor in the coxswain's box. "Is that you, O'Neil?" he exclaimed in some surprise.

"Yes, sir. I happened to be handy, so Mr. Morrison told me to get in. The regular cox-

swain wasn't on deck," O'Neil replied. "I've been hearing of this fellow 'Bully' Scott ashore. All the natives say he's bringing arms for the Kapuan firm, to be sold to Kataafa. These natives are like women; they can't keep secrets; it ain't in them."

"Why does he come into Ukula, then?" Phil asked.

"Oh, that's like 'Bully' Scott. He could have taken them anywhere else, but he enjoys doing something unexpected," O'Neil answered admiringly.

"He has probably then already landed his guns," Phil said, disappointedly. "Of course, that's the explanation. His guilty cargo is no longer on board to convict him."

O'Neil steered the boat alongside the schooner's sea ladder, and Phil swung himself over the low rail. Everything was in darkness around him.

"Bring that lantern here, you lazy black rascal," a big, hearty voice called, and from the darkness Phil saw take shape a figure that he could have avowed to be that of a Puritan father or a missionary bishop. A tall man, elderly, dressed in dark clothes, a

flowing gray beard sweeping his expansive chest. The lantern, brought quickly by the "black rascal," showed a handsome and benevolent countenance.

"I am delighted to see you, sir," he said courteously and in a voice so refined as to fairly startle Phil.

"Are you the captain?" the lad stammered, as he accepted the proffered hand.

"At your service, sir. Captain 'Bully' Scott is the name by which I'm known in these waters."

Phil took a firmer grip upon himself. How much easier he would have found his task if Captain Scott had been in appearance the pirate he had pictured him.

"My captain, Commander Tazewell, of the cruiser 'Sitka,' sends his compliments and wishes a little information. The usual boarding information, you know."

"Walk aft, sir," Captain Scott requested politely. "You are welcome to the information," he continued as he placed the lantern on the deck table between them, "but I take it, Commander Tazewell supposed my ship was sailing under American colors."

Phil hesitated how to reply. The benevolent eyes were upon him.

"I can't say as to that," the lad replied slowly, "but the general impression I got was that you were an American citizen."

The lantern shed a dim light over the narrow deck space. The native sailors were busily furling the massive sails. Phil heard the rhythmical sound of oars in their rowlocks; other boats were approaching the "Talofa." He heard the scraping of a boat alongside and the heavy breathing of a man climbing up the ship's side. Captain Scott had left the midshipman to investigate the new arrivals. He had made as yet no reply to the young officer's insinuating remark.

"Why on earth did you enter the harbor?" he heard the newcomer exclaim as he swung his leg over the rail. Phil recognized the decidedly foreign accents of Klinger's voice.

"Aha!" Phil thought. "Not so innocent after all."

Scott answered the question in a strange tongue, and Phil saw Klinger glance quickly in his direction.

Phil's eye as he attentively listened had

been fixed upon the compass binnacle near him. He noted a bar of iron jammed closely against it and apparently tied in that position.

"Queer manner of correcting a compass," he thought.

The two men at the gangway continued to talk. Phil recognized the language to be Kapuan, of which he could not understand a word.

"To-morrow morning, then, I shall be ashore," Captain Scott said finally in English. "When will my cargo be ready?"

"It's ready now at the plantations," Klinger answered also in English. "You've got to go for it." Then he lapsed again into Kapuan. After a few more minutes the man again climbed down the schooner's side and into his boat, then Captain Scott walked aft to join Phil, while Klinger's boat pulled swiftly toward the shore.

"I'm under contract with the Kapuan firm," Captain Scott said pleasantly. "That was the manager, Klinger. He is a very disagreeable fellow, and I shall be glad to finish my business with him and be off."

Phil saw there could be nothing further

learned from Captain Scott, yet he was firmly convinced from Klinger's remark that something had miscarried. There were a number of questions, however, usual in boarding an arriving vessel, which he proceeded to ask the captain.

"Under what flag are you sailing?" Phil inquired.

"Herzovinian," Captain Scott replied readily.

"You have no contraband on board?" the midshipman asked suddenly, his eyes riveted upon the sea-captain's face.

Captain Scott's benign smile returned.

"Young man, there's no longer any profit in firearms.—Is that why your captain was so prompt to send his officer aboard?" he asked, laughing as if he enjoyed the joke immensely. "And besides, with the entire island available for a vessel of the 'Talofa's' draft, Captain Scott would not be likely to sail into Ukula with a cargo of arms; not while there are three consuls ashore, and as many war-ships at anchor in the harbor. My cargo consists of cotton cloth and canned stuffs for the 'firm,' and I return to Fiji with a load of 'copra.'"

"What is that bar of iron alongside the compass?" Phil asked curiously. He was firmly convinced that Klinger and Captain Scott were partners in some unlawful trade, but for the life of him could not see how he could drag from this benevolent host, albeit pirate and smuggler, information upon which action could be taken.

Captain Scott eyed the bar of steel. Phil thought he discerned a slight start, at least a hesitancy in his manner.

"That," the captain replied, "is one of my mate's clever ideas in correcting the compass. I don't know where he learned it, but it seems very effective."

Phil called to his boat, thanked Captain Scott, and was soon returning to the "Sitka."

After he had gone Captain Scott tore the steel bar savagely from the compass. Then he walked forward to the forecastle. His sailors had about finished stowing the sails.

"Stump," he called. He glanced about the deck. There was no one there. He picked up his mate's hat from the spot where the man had fallen under the blow from Captain Scott's

fist. He turned toward several natives who were on the point of going below, their work finished.

"Find Mr. Stump," he ordered anxiously. "Look for him at once." He himself hurried about the ship, seeking him in every dark corner; but Stump could not be found.

"The ungrateful dog!" he cried in a fearful rage. Captain "Bully" Scott now showed his true colors. He raved and stormed. The natives cowered away from him. The steel bar in his hand was waved above his head menacingly.

"If I ever get him on board here again I'll smash him into an unrecognizable blot on the deck," he raved. "He's gone! He brought the 'Talofa' into Ukula with this bar of steel! He's probably boasting at this minute how he did it." He shook his fist at the war-ship, whose lights blazed brightly several hundred yards away. "It's a race with 'Bully' Scott," he exclaimed. "You think you have me cornered. To-morrow, or even to-night, you will have the story from my sneaking mate. Then you will search and discover the arms; but I'll fool you yet."

A swiftly propelled boat swung up alongside

the schooner. A tall man swung himself with no apparent muscular effort over the rail and stood in the darkness seeking some one on the schooner.

Captain Scott, still beside himself with rage, spied the newcomer. His rage subsided. Again the benevolent expression returned to his face while a native quickly brought forward the lantern and revealed the face of Count Rosen.

"Has the American officer gone?" the count asked hastily, glancing covertly around.

Captain Scott nodded. "Asked if I had contraband and seemed satisfied when I told him if I had I should hardly have brought them into Ukula when there were other ports in the island free and open."

The count's face showed perplexity. Was this American merchant captain deceiving him and Klinger? "Why did you come into Ukula?" he asked.

Captain Scott chuckled. "A little stratagem, count. You see, Klinger wrote to go to Saluafata, but the 'Talofa' preferred Ukula. We have until daylight to land our cargo. The war-ship will not think we can do any-

thing before morning. I told Klinger to send over his barges quietly at once."

The count was not satisfied. He did not share the optimism of Captain Scott.

With a curt bow he returned to his boat and swiftly rowed toward the Herzovinian cruiser. As he stepped upon the deck, an officer and several sailors of the watch met him. They saluted with deep respect.

"I wish to see your captain upon important business," he announced. He was conducted at once to the cabin.

He remained in consultation only a few minutes. When he returned accompanied by the captain, a war-ship's boat was manned, a young officer in command. Count Rosen bowed graciously to the attentive captain and entered the boat, sending ashore his own after paying the helmsman liberally.

The boat pulled close under the bows of the American cruiser, on its way to the schooner. The count noticed a war-ship's boat ready manned at the gangway. From the schooner came faint sounds of men laboring. They had already begun to open the hatches.

Half-way to the schooner a noise as of a swimmer caught the count's attentive ear.

"What is that?" he asked the young officer. At the word of command the men stopped rowing. Scarcely fifty yards away appeared a man's head; he was making rather feeble progress through the water. The boat was quickly brought alongside the swimmer and the man hauled on board.

A lantern was held up to his face. It was pale and haggard. The man was almost exhausted. The count noticed that the swimmer's face was much swollen and discolored, as if from a blow. Even in the tropical air his teeth chattered and speech was nearly impossible. The count took off his own cape and wrapped it about the trembling figure. Then the boat pulled for the schooner, several hundred yards away.

The officer and three men scrambled on board. Two small lighters were lying alongside the "Talofa," and a score of "blacks" were making ready to discharge her cargo.

The count asked a hurried question. The young officer in his party saluted and answered in the affirmative, pointing to a bundle

under his arm. The boat waited until a fluttering flag rose slowly to the peak of the main gaff. It was too dark to distinguish the markings, but the count knew that the situation had been saved. The "Talofa" was under the protection of his navy's flag.

The count had hardly cleared the gangway before the "Sitka's" boat rounded to under the schooner's stern and shot alongside.

"If Captain Scott has sold out to his countrymen," the count exclaimed to himself, "he will find it difficult to deliver the goods."

At the dock he alighted. The rescued man was supported up to the hotel between two sailors.

Dry clothes were provided him and from his medicine chest the count administered a sleeping draught. Once snugly wrapped in blankets in one of the rooms of the count's suite, and a native boy sleeping across the only exit, the count felt sure that the stranger would be on hand in the morning to explain the mystery of why a white man was swimming from the "Talofa" toward the "Sitka," his face bruised and himself half exhausted.

It would be worth all the trouble he had taken to know.

The count yawned. It was nearly midnight, and in the tropics one must be an early riser, for the heat of the morning sun does not conduce to refreshing sleep. He dismissed the sailors who had aided him. Then he shut his door and threw himself down on his couch to think.

After several minutes, he rose and penned two notes. Sealing them, he called one of the attendant natives.

"Take this one at once," he directed; "the other," he added to himself, "can wait until early to-morrow morning."

The native bowed and disappeared upon his errand.

CHAPTER VI

THE "TALOFA'S" CARGO

PHIL, upon his return to the "Sitka," recounted to his captain everything that had occurred during his visit to the suspected schooner.

"I am confident, sir," he ended, "that Captain Scott has arms on board, and further, that Klinger is in much concern that he has brought them openly to this harbor when he might have landed them elsewhere."

Commander Tazewell commended the midshipman for his energy. "It's a difficult question to settle," he said. "I have no proof of Scott's nationality. He was born in San Francisco, they say, of Irish-Scotch parents. He has no right to sail under the Herzovinian flag unless his vessel is owned by people of that nation or he himself is a subject of that country."

The commander paced his cabin for sev-

eral minutes thoughtfully in silence. Upon his shoulders great responsibilities rested. Every act must be carefully considered. Where other nations were so intimately concerned, especially in the irritable political atmosphere of Kapua, where every white man's hand seemed against his white neighbor and the poor, innocent native is but the instrument upon which the selfish desires are to be perpetrated, ill judged acts had best be avoided.

"I can't see that we can do more now, Mr. Perry," he added in finality. "I shall have the officer of the deck keep his weather eye on the 'Talofa' during the night."

As Phil rejoined the officer of the deck, six bells were striking. The "Talofa" was in darkness except for her single anchor stay light. The night was quiet. The sea breeze had decreased in force.

It was not long before the watchers on the American war-ship discovered that the two canoe shaped barges of the Kapuan firm were being poled out toward the anchored schooner. When this was surely noted and reported to the captain, he ordered the boat be held ready

and for Phil to stand by to return and investigate.

"Probably getting ready for the morning," Lieutenant Morrison suggested.

"If there are arms there," Phil replied, "and I am inclined to think there must be, Captain Scott will either try to unload to-night or else he will leave them in his holds until he arrives at a safer place."

Faint sounds of creaking tackles and the noise of opening hatches came across the intervening water.

"They are going to unload to-night," Phil exclaimed. "What a splendid nerve that fellow Captain Scott must have."

The startling news brought Commander Tazewell on deck.

"Have the gig manned," he ordered quietly, "and let Mr. Perry take the whale-boat and investigate what is going forward there. I must break the ice between us and the Herzovinian commander. I cannot stand idly by and see such an outrage committed."

Once more, with O'Neil in the coxswain's box, Phil was heading for the "Talofa." He had barely cleared the "Sitka's" side when

another boat came out of the darkness ahead, crossed the whale-boat's bow and sheered alongside the schooner.

"From the Herzovinian war-ship," O'Neil exclaimed.

Phil's pulse quickened. The situation was growing acute.

"If it comes to a fight," he said excitedly, "we are two to one," pointing in the direction of the British cruiser, "but a fight here would plunge three great nations into war."

"It's only a bluff, sir," O'Neil sized up the situation sagely. "Those fellows are the cleverest dodgers you ever laid eyes on. They can fight all right, there's no denying that fact, but their cleverest dodge is to play politics. I've seen them do it against the 'chinks' in China, and against the dagos in South America. When a Herzovinian officer goes too far the king with his right hand gives him a hook in the solar plexus, and then, to soften the medicine, with his left hangs the order of the red tailed eagle around his neck."

Phil laughed nervously. "What do we do to our officers who overstep the bounds of

international etiquette?" he asked, thinking of the predicament in which Commander Tazewell found himself suddenly involved.

"That's easy to answer, sir," O'Neil replied readily enough. "He gets the solar plexus blow from the man at the 'top,' and unless he's popular with a few big newspaper editors, usually dies an official death. Now Admiral Benham, when he belayed that revolution in Brazil some years ago, was on the point of getting the 'hook,' when a friend of his gave him a great 'pipe off' in the New York papers. He made the admiral a Farragut and an Abraham Lincoln spliced together. The 'hook' was quietly stowed away for future use."

As the "Sitka's" whale-boat was steered alongside, the foreign boat shoved off. Phil peered eagerly through the darkness. He saw an erect figure in white in the stern sheets.

"Looks for all the world like that Herzovinian count," he exclaimed excitedly. O'Neil strained his eyes to see, but the boat was rapidly being swallowed into the night.

Phil noted the two big cargo canoes alongside the schooner, while he saw a score or more

of figures moving about on the deck above him. He was on the point of climbing the ladder when a voice from above in broken English called to him to halt.

"No one is permit to enter," the man said. Phil saw that it was a Herzovinian sailor.

"I would like to speak to your officer, if there is one there," Phil said haughtily.

"What do you want?" was asked gruffly. "This vessel is chartered by the Herzovinian government, and it is not permitted to visit."

Phil's anger blazed into flame. For the fraction of a second he was on the point of leading his men up to forcibly capture the schooner, but the cool, restraining hand of O'Neil, an old friend frequently encountered by this impetuous youth, brought second thoughts to ward off a rash act.

"Steady, sir," O'Neil whispered. "There's a big flag flapping up there. Can't tell for sure, but I can guess that it's the man-of-war flag. We've made them show their hand; don't spoil it by getting yourself in trouble."

Phil sank back into the boat. His foot had been on the lower rung of the sea ladder.

"May I inquire what you are unloading?" he asked.

There were indistinct whispers from above.

"Furniture for our consulate," came the answer after some delay.

"You are not unloading guns for Kataafa, then?" Phil retorted angrily.

There was no reply. The sailor continued to block the rail above where Phil was standing.

"Shove off, O'Neil," he exclaimed. "If we stay here longer, I couldn't resist the temptation of pitching the whole lot of them overboard."

"Excuse me for saying so, Mr. Perry," O'Neil apologized as the sailors rowed back to their ship. "You've got to learn caution when you're playing against those fellows. They are up in diplomacy. They live on it, and to beat 'em you've got to forget you've got a temper. It ain't at all necessary; in fact, it's a superfluity." O'Neil was fond of using big words, which he always accented on every syllable, as if by so doing their vague meaning would be more readily grasped.

When Phil returned Commander Tazewell was on the point of embarking to visit the Herzovinian war-ship, but after listening to the startling intelligence brought by Phil he at once decided that a visit at this time of night would be barren of results. Kataafa would probably obtain arms for his warriors through the Kapuan firm. A higher power than the Herzovinian commander had so ordained. The fact was, however, worth knowing. Plans must be made to meet this new development. He might send trusty men ashore to spy on those who were unloading the "Talofa."

Just then a native canoe ranged alongside, while the paddler held up a letter. The quartermaster went down to receive it; it was for Commander Tazewell.

The captain opened it eagerly. The handwriting was unfamiliar.

"My dear Commander Tazewell," he read in perfectly written English. He had already glanced at the bottom for the name and had seen "Your obedient servant, Felix Rosen." He continued to read: "I crave a thousand pardons, but an opportunity has arisen for

me to take a cruise about the Kapuan Islands in a schooner. She is now unloading. The captain of our war-ship was kind enough to come to my aid and direct the work. I believe there is some government freight among the cargo. I hope to get away in the morning, so our trip to 'Papasea' must only be postponed. I have also excused myself to the ladies."

Commander Tazewell as he finished uttered an exclamation of bewilderment. He handed the letter to Lieutenant Morrison and then to Phil.

Phil read the letter, while his indignation increased at every line of the carefully worded explanation. He was on the point of condemning the entire crowd of schemers when his glance fell upon the eager face of the captain's orderly, Schultz.

"Well!" Commander Tazewell exclaimed. "They've had the last word. There's no getting behind that letter."

He turned to Lieutenant Morrison, standing expectantly waiting to hear what would be the next move. "You may secure the boats for the night," he said.

CHAPTER VII

THE KAPUAN FIRM

CARL KLINGER had been sitting in his office at the Kapuan firm's store when a loud knocking aroused him from his reveries. He rose quickly to open the door.

"What do you want?" he inquired roughly in Kapuan as he threw open the door. A native, much out of breath from running, confronted him. Klinger saw it was one of the pilot's boat-crew from the pilot station on Matautu Point at the entrance to the harbor.

"The 'Talofa' coming in through the entrance," the man replied. "Captain Svenson send me to tell you quick."

"How do you know it's the 'Talofa'?" Klinger asked incredulously. He could not believe that Captain Scott would be so foolhardy as to enter Ukula harbor with his cargo. Twenty Solomon Island natives to work on the plantations, actually kidnapped from their homes, beside several thousand

Snyder rifles with millions of rounds of ammunition constituted the greatest part of the "Talofa's" cargo. Had "Bully" Scott gone mad?

"No other but Captain Scott could find the entrance to the harbor on a night like this," the man replied positively. Klinger noted the utter blackness of the night. He was enough of a sailorman himself to understand the dangers attending the navigation of a vessel so large as the "Talofa." Even the pilots preferred to wait until daylight before bringing a vessel through the treacherous coral reefs.

"Wait," he ordered. Then returning to his desk he wrote several pages of a letter, sealed and addressed it, then gave it to the native messenger.

"Take this to the Tivoli Hotel," he instructed. "Find Count Rosen and give it into no other hands."

From the porch of the store he gazed upon the harbor, but the darkness shrouded the vessel for which his anxious eyes were searching. His mind was sorely troubled. "Bully" Scott was not a character to pin one's faith to.

That hardened pirate went where either his fancy led him or where the greatest amount of coin awaited him. The guns had already been paid for with Klinger's money; only the freight charges were due. The Solomon Islanders were Scott's own venture. The one balanced the other. If he should betray the Kapuan firm by permitting the war-ships to confiscate them as contraband, then the presence of the blacks would be known and must convict the pirate in any court of the South Seas. Nationality could not protect slave trading, although it might the importation of arms. The "Talofa" was sailing illegally under Herzovinian protection. Count Rosen, while in Fiji, had arranged for that with Scott. A word from Klinger would cause Scott to be arrested straightway and taken before the chief justice. The penalty for slave trading was at least ten years in a penal colony.

"He may have discharged both the slaves and the guns," he exclaimed. Then he apparently realized that this was impossible, for he added aloud, "Couldn't have done that, or I should have heard of it by now." As he

still gazed seaward he saw the lights of a warship disappear one at a time, and knew that the schooner was then passing between the man-of-war and himself.

He called loudly to arouse some of the native help who lived in houses back of the store.

A native finally appeared.

"Get the boat boys," Klinger ordered hurriedly. "I shall require them at once."

The schooner anchored only a few hundred yards from him before the sleepy natives had launched his boat. Klinger paced the sand impatiently. He was consumed with anxiety for the safety of his guns. Thirty thousand dollars was to be the profit upon them. And besides, the decision of the chief justice might be given at any moment. Kataafa must have these guns before the decision was rendered, for that was required to carry out the "coup de main" which must throw the Kapuan Islands into the lap of his country.

Angry and bitter at the man who had played fast and loose with his plans, Klinger climbed the "Talofa's" side and met the culprit face to face.

Klinger's first question was more forceful than elegant. Captain "Bully" Scott only smiled in his urbane style and answered the question in Kapuan.

"Hold your tongue. There's an American naval officer standing aft by the compass."

Klinger saw by the dim lantern's light the sheen of a white duck uniform.

"What's he doing here?" he asked suspiciously.

"Only a matter of natural curiosity," Scott replied.

"Tell me why you didn't follow my instructions," Klinger asked. "Have you the guns on board?"

"I have everything that I started out to bring here," Scott returned, "and what's more I'm going to land everything as snugly as a down East whaler in winter quarters."

Klinger felt much relieved. The calm confidence of the man impressed him.

"How?" was all he could ask.

"Send off your cargo lighters as soon as you can," Scott explained. "Get the count to ask for a few sailors from your war-ship to stay here and prevent the English or Ameri-

cans from watching us. The count is then to charter the 'Talofa' for a pleasure trip around the group of islands, starting as soon as we are unloaded. We shall unload part of the cargo to-night, at once."

"I don't dare to take the guns ashore here," Klinger exclaimed. "We can't keep the knowledge away from these prying natives."

"Just leave that to me. They don't go ashore here; that's my plan," Captain Scott replied soothingly. "You do as I tell you. That's all you need worry about. Does the count know we are in?" he asked.

"I sent him a note as soon as I learned it," Klinger answered. "I don't yet see what was your object in coming here. Saluafata was wide open."

"All you've got to figure on," Scott said quietly, "is that I'm here. Say something in English now to throw that young cub naval officer off the scent and go hurry off those lighters. If you see the count tell him to come off here or go and get those sailors first."

Klinger's mind was relieved of much of the

strain of uncertainty, yet he felt far from sure that Scott's plan would succeed as easily as the optimistic Scott imagined. He had not entirely acquitted Scott of the charge of perfidy.

The two men then spoke in English in regard to the return cargo of the "Talofa," and parted apparently to meet again in the morning.

As Klinger rowed ashore he met Count Rosen going out to the schooner. The two boats stopped alongside each other. Klinger hurriedly outlined Scott's plan as far as he had learned it.

"I'll drop aboard just to satisfy myself that he isn't betraying us," the count said to himself as the two boats went their several ways.

As the count left the "Talofa" and rowed toward the Herzovinian war-ship, he was nearly convinced that Scott was playing fair, but upon his return after picking up the white man swimming toward the American war-ship, distrust of the pirate again appeared strongly in his mind.

Just before dawn Klinger saw the last one of the many boxes brought ashore from the

schooner carried and piled upon the porch of the store. The twenty new slaves brought by Scott, for whom he had paid a handsome sum of money to the schooner's captain, had been set to work unloading, and they were now on their way under native guard to the Vaileli plantation.

The boxes landed were of all sizes, and most of them were left unopened upon the porch of the store. Klinger stationed two of his boat boys as guard, and then turned in upon the small bed in his office.

"Mighty queer proceedings," he exclaimed as he closed his tired eyes. "But I guess the count can handle the situation."

When Count Rosen awakened the next morning, his first act was to open the blinds and glance out upon the harbor. Everything was peaceful and serene; the "Talofa" lay snugly at anchor. The firm's lighters were alongside the dock in front of the store. It was low tide and the fringing reef was peopled with natives gathering the many edibles, turtle, crayfish and a variety of shell-fish, that form a great proportion of the Kapuan diet. The count entered the adjoining room; the

memory of the man picked up from the water the night before had suddenly recurred to him. The room was empty. He called loudly for his native boy.

"Where is the stranger?" he asked.

"Gone out for a bath," the boy answered innocently, showing his white teeth in a childlike smile.

"Bring him back at once," the count commanded. "Tell him I wish to see him."

The boy hastened on his errand, jingling several pieces of silver he had acquired from the very stranger whom he was seeking.

The count dressed hastily and himself took up the search for the missing man.

On the beach in front of the hotel he encountered his boy quietly sitting in the sand, his gaze upon the panorama of the bay.

"Where is he?" the count exclaimed, much annoyed at the boy's indifference.

"Afraid he's not here," the boy acknowledged.

If a look could kill the native would have died on the spot.

It was evident that the stranger had sought other protection.

Much annoyed at losing this man, whom he believed might have given him information of value to hold over the head of Captain Scott, he turned his steps toward his consulate.

Mr. Carlson was drinking tea on his porch when the count arrived.

"I came to tell you," the count said condescendingly, "that I am taking a trip on that schooner anchored in the bay. Klinger discharged the cargo last night. It was all for the Kapuan firm."

The consul should have been consulted first before discharging cargo, but he knew that to hold his place as consul he must always meet the demands of Klinger.

"I'd like to have you give me the clearance papers," the count continued. "She will go to the plantations for copra and then return here. She's now in ballast."

Carlson called his native clerk and told him to prepare the papers. The count was named as supercargo for the trip.

After receiving the clearance papers the count did not linger at the consulate.

"Remember, Mr. Carlson," he said as he rose to go, "if the chief justice decides not

to acknowledge Kataafa as king, you have agreed to refuse to stand with the other consuls to uphold that decision. The eagle," he added, "is a coveted decoration."

The consul blushed with pleasure and smilingly nodded his fat head vigorously.

Having eaten his breakfast and packed up sufficient clothes to take with him in the "Talofa," the count strolled to the store. Klinger having been up all night was yet asleep in his office. The count seated himself on the porch and sent word by one of the natives standing guard over the freight from the schooner.

Klinger appeared shortly.

"You did a good night's work, I see," said the count.

Klinger nodded sleepily.

"Has Captain Scott a white man in his crew?" the count asked.

"Yes, of course. Stump," the manager replied, opening wide his eyes. "I remember now I didn't see him on the schooner last night."

"What does this Stump look like?" the count asked. Klinger described him accurately.

"That's the very man," the count exclaimed in alarm. "He deserted the schooner and tried to swim to the American war-ship. I picked him out of the water nearly drowned, and he slept at the Tivoli Hotel last night. He's now loose in Ukula, and may spoil everything unless we can stop his tongue."

Klinger, however, did not seem greatly alarmed.

"It's odd that Scott didn't speak of it, but I'm sure he can do no harm," he replied quietly. "Stump is a peaceful, simple soul. Hasn't sense enough to know how to harm anybody except himself. We are sure to get the arms to Kataafa, and the 'black' boys are now at Vaileli plantation."

"What are you going to do with these more or less empty boxes?" the count suddenly asked, tapping upon them with his cane, apparently satisfied over the matter of Stump.

"Leave them right here until I again hear from you," Klinger replied. "They'll arouse every one's curiosity and divert attention from the 'Talofa.'"

The count nodded. "But not without a guard," he said pointedly. "You must see

Carlson and have him order the war-ship's captain to send a file of sailors to spend the night at the store. That will help us a great deal, and," he added, "don't be too secret about it."

"I understand," Klinger answered knowingly.

"I'll be off in the 'Talofa' this forenoon," the count said, glancing out on the bay. "There doesn't seem to be much breeze, yet it will be enough, I dare say, for the 'Talofa' to clear the entrance reefs."

The count was on the point of taking his departure. "Whoever comes ashore with the sailor guard should thoroughly understand what is expected of his men," he continued.

Klinger reassured him, and as he watched the commanding figure of the count disappear down the road, the manager smiled in perfect enjoyment. "They didn't make any mistake when they sent him to Kapua," he exclaimed admiringly.

Several hours later Klinger watched the "Talofa" beat cleverly against a light head wind out of the harbor. He watched the swift schooner, under a full spread of canvas, sail to

the eastward until the point of Matautu, with its high cliffs, shut her off from view.

"So Stump's deserted that old pirate Scott at last," he said to himself amusedly. "When thieves fall out," he quoted. "I wonder where the simpleton is at this minute.—I rather like him," he added thoughtfully, "and if I could find him I'd be inclined to shield him from that hypocrite of a sea-pirate."

A native came briskly along the road advancing toward Klinger, a letter held out to him. Klinger took it, opened and read.

"If Stump turns up after I am gone lock him up. I will explain when I return.

"SCOTT."

Klinger tore the note into small pieces, strewing them on the ground as he walked rapidly toward the center of the town.

At the municipal building he stopped. Several native policemen lounged about on the ground or squatted upon rude wooden benches.

"Hey, Johnny Upolu!" he called, and a tall, finely muscled native, attired in a blue

cotton lava-lava[1] and helmet, hurriedly drew on his blue policeman's coat over his nakedness.

"You know Stump, mate of the 'Talofa'?" he said. The chief of the municipal police smiled knowingly. "He's been up to mischief and the consul wants him taken up."

Johnny smiled proudly. He was a strong partisan of Kataafa, and was only too eager to show his friendliness to the papalangi, who were backing his favorite chief.

"All right, Missi Klinger," he replied in a strictly businesslike voice. "I'll get him."

Klinger smiled his satisfaction and passed on his way.

At the consulate his reception was none too cordial. Carlson disliked the ascendency which this manager of a commercial firm had over one occupying the office of representative of his government, especially as Klinger made no attempt to soften this evident fact by any "finesse" whatsoever. Klinger openly accused the consul of being soft-hearted, and too friendly with the English and Americans.

"I must ride to Faleula planation to-night,"

[1] Lava-lava—Loin cloth.

Klinger said brusquely after he had seated himself. "I haven't had time to unpack and stow away some valuable cargo just received from the 'Talofa,' and I want a guard of sailors from the war-ship to protect the store during my absence."

Carlson glanced at Klinger in open-eyed surprise.

"What will come next?" he exclaimed. "Sailors to guard your store from robbers! Who are the robbers?"

Klinger shrugged his shoulders contemptuously.

"Maybe your friends the English and Americans," he said calmly. "I have asked you for a guard. I know the business of the firm better than you do. That's what I'm paid for."

The consul bit his lips in suppressed rage.

"Is this another one of your tricks," the consul exclaimed, "to further mortify me?" He had in mind only too vividly another occasion where Klinger had demanded sailors to guard his property and then had hoisted the flag at the municipal flagstaff, telling all the natives that his country had annexed the

islands. The flag remained flying only until the next mail arrived, when the consul was severely reprimanded by his government and was forced to haul down the flag and rehoist the Kapuan ensign in its place.

"I want about a dozen sailors," Klinger insisted. "If you need a little leg stiffening," he added cruelly, "I don't mind telling you that Count Rosen approves, even suggested the action." Klinger had sized up his hearer.

"That puts another aspect on the question," Carlson exclaimed, much mollified by the mention of the count's concurrence. "When do you require these sailors?"

"By four o'clock this afternoon," Klinger replied, "and I forgot to say I told the chief of police in your name to arrest and hold one Stump, a deserter from the 'Talofa.'"

"Stump! Why, he's English or American!" Carlson exclaimed alarmedly. "I'm having enough trouble without borrowing more."

"Another suggestion of the count," Klinger said quietly. "Please send a written warrant to Johnny Upolu at once."

"Oh, well, then, that's all right," the consul replied, again changing his tone of voice.

"I WANT ABOUT A DOZEN SAILORS"

"The count, Klinger, is a very brilliant diplomat and I'm sure would not suggest anything which would get me into trouble."

"I dare say," Klinger said with a smirk. "The difference between you and the count in diplomacy is that he knows what he wants."

Carlson turned very red, but upon second thoughts appeared not to notice the implied insult.

With a curt good-morning Klinger took his departure.

"Why do they send such mountains of ignorance and conceit to manage our political affairs?" he complained. He little reckoned that a wise government had sent Carlson to act as a check upon Klinger. The radical Klinger and the conservative Carlson gave the exact mixture required.

At exactly four o'clock the sailors arrived. Klinger took aside the petty officer in charge and in detail laid down for him the course he was to follow during his absence.

Then he mounted his little pony and turned its head toward Kulinuu, the seat of government of the uncrowned king, Kataafa.

Arriving at the king's house, he entered and was ceremoniously received.

Kava was made and all the chiefs were gathered to drink.

Klinger talked for nearly an hour, explaining and directing. Then he rose and bade a ceremonious farewell. Accompanied by several mounted natives he departed, and in the gathering darkness took the trail leading back of Ukula and toward the eastward, while Faleula, where he told Carson he was going, lay in exactly the opposite direction.

CHAPTER VIII

AVAO, TAPAU OF UKULA

THE morning following the arrival of the schooner, Phil and Sydney were on deck early. The "Talofa" was still at anchor. The canoe barges were lying alongside the dock at the store of the Kapuan firm. Herzovinian colors were flying on the schooner. Phil had given his friend a full account of the perplexing happenings of the night before.

"If the schooner brought guns where are they now?" Phil asked.

Sydney shook his head. "Ask me something easier," he replied. "I'm not good at conundrums."

After morning quarters and drill the midshipmen dressed for a visit ashore. This was only the second day of their arrival and each was full of eager interest to explore. Their shipmates poked much good-natured fun at them for their strenuosity.

"Hitting the beach before lunch?" the

doctor inquired with mock gravity. "I'm afraid I'll have to examine your sanity."

After landing they walked along the main road toward the Kapuan firm's store. As they passed, the portly figure of Klinger could be seen within the doorway, while on the porch a score or more of large boxes were displayed to view. A glance at the barges lying at the wooden dock showed them to be empty. The cargo had been discharged during the night.

"The 'Talofa's' getting up anchor," Sydney suddenly exclaimed.

The schooner's mainsail had been set and the crew were plainly seen heaving around the capstan, weighing the anchor.

"The count is off on his cruise about the islands," Phil said. "I wonder," he added thoughtfully, "if those boxes really do contain arms?"

"Very likely," his companion answered, "but come on. You can't look through their wooden sides."

At the house of Chief Tuamana, Avao met them with a demure smile of welcome on her comely face.

"Missi Alice is here," she cried out to them joyously as she took each by the hand and led them into the cool shelter under her father's roof tree.

The midshipmen glanced about for Alice. The big room was deserted, but from behind the tapa curtain came much merry laughter, and finally Alice appeared dragging with her two very shy young native girls.

"We're going to make Kava Fa'a Kapua,"[1] she said as she seated herself native fashion, "and then we're going out to 'Jumping Rock' for a swim. If you care to go we shall be delighted to have you join us," she told the midshipmen.

Avao brought out a small piece of kava root, holding it out for Alice to inspect.

"I'm the alii,"[2] Alice said. "I'm supposed to judge if the root is of good quality before the Tapau chews it."

"Chews it!" Phil exclaimed. "I thought it was to be a drink."

"So it is," Alice replied, thoroughly enjoy-

[1] Kava Fa'a Kapua. Kava—A drink something like oat-meal water. Fa'a—Native custom.

[2] Alii—Chief.

ing the depth of Phil's ignorance of the Kapuan custom. "Avao is the 'Tapau'; she will chew the kava root; look!" she exclaimed admiringly.

The midshipmen turned their eyes toward Avao. Her cheeks were already bulging as she sat stoically ruminating the root while one of the other girls fed her from time to time an additional sliver.

For fully fifteen minutes Avao was busily engaged in reducing the root to a pulpy mass which finally she held in her hand and then put into the kava bowl beside her.

Next came the washing. Pure water was poured carefully over the mass and Avao daintily cleansed her hands and then gracefully squatted before the bowl.

While one girl poured water slowly into the bowl, Avao kneaded the material vigorously. The liquid soon began to assume a greenish tinge, and the midshipmen involuntarily shuddered at the idea of drinking the concoction.

"Do you know, kava never agrees with me," Phil said in an aside, in order not to hurt the feelings of their native friends, "especially in the morning."

"I never could see anything in it either," Sydney answered. "I'd much prefer a lemonade or a drink of cocoanut milk."

Alice overheard the remarks and smiled wickedly. "This is probably the last real cup of kava you'll get," she said. "The chewing has gone out of fashion since the fomais[1] have taught the Kapuans about the spread of germs. We got this up especially for your benefit."

"It was awfully good of you," Phil acknowledged miserably, "but really I don't believe I need any kava this morning."

Avao was now working a strainer[2] to and fro in the liquid. The grace of her motions was delightful to see and elicited much admiration from the midshipmen. Finally, with a last fleck of the strainer, she dropped it into the bowl and clapped her shapely hands.

All present took up the clapping. It was the sign that the kava was ready to be served.

The midshipmen dreaded the ordeal. "I feel like a kid about to be given a dose of bad medicine," Sydney whispered.

[1] Fomai—Doctor. [2] Strainer—Made of vegetable growth.

One of the attendant girls then arose with "hipu"[1] in hand. She held the cocoanut shell cup over the bowl, while Avao squeezed the liquid into it from the strainer. The midshipmen were amazed at the charm and grace in every movement. Each time the strainer was squeezed the cup bearer swung the cup in a circle. She then faced about and, with the cup held at the level of her dainty chin, directed her dark eyes toward Phil.

"I'm it," he groaned.

Alice, bubbling over with mischief, exclaimed: "A cup of kava for Mr. Perry."

The next second the cup of greenish liquid, after a graceful underhand curve, as the girl bent her knees, was held before the disconsolate lad.

"Cheer up," Sydney exclaimed. "Hold your nose and shut your eyes and she'll give you something to make you wise."

Phil took the cup gingerly. To his horror it was nearly full to the brim.

"Must I drink it all?" he asked Alice nervously.

"If you don't, I am afraid Avao will look

[1] Hipu—Cup.

for another 'felinge,'" she replied teasingly.

"Count for me, Syd," Phil said, "and when you see the folks at home, say I died game."

He calmly swallowed the contents without drawing breath, and handed the cup back to the girl.

"Thanks awfully, no more just now," he said laughing, happy the ordeal was over.

"What's it like?" Sydney asked.

"More like drinking slate pencils than anything else I can imagine."

Sydney drank his, shuddering slightly at the bitter taste. All the others, including Alice, drank as if they thoroughly enjoyed it.

"You get accustomed to it," Alice explained. "The Kapuans drink it as we do coffee or tea."

After kava was over the lads found that native ponies had been provided by Avao, and within a half hour the cavalcade started. A dozen or more of Kapuan men brought up the rear on foot, carrying many kinds of fruit and edibles wrapped in banana leaves.

Alice and Avao led the procession, while the midshipmen came next. They trotted

along a sylvan path for about a mile, then in single file through the wet "bush."

"It was lucky for us we happened along," Phil said to Alice as they halted to admire a great banyan tree close to the path.

"It was only by accident I am here, too," she answered. "Tuamana, Avao's father, and all the chiefs loyal to Panu, are in council at the 'Jumping Rock.' The girls are taking their feast to them."

"Oh!" Phil exclaimed. "Maybe they will not be glad to see us."

"The Kapuan is always delighted to have papalangi at his feasts," Alice assured him; "especially as they know the Americans are very friendly to Panu's claim to the throne. The Kataafa chiefs might not be so cordial if we dropped in on them."

The two midshipmen were amazed at the sight when the place chosen for the council had been reached. A score or more of warriors were found squatting in the grass near the huge rock over which the Vaisaigo stream plunged. A large pool of dark water below the falls was thus kept filled, and where the solid stream curved and fell the blackness

was changed to white foam and iridescent spray.

They found the council was over. The business having been finished the chiefs were ready to eat and then after a time bathe in the deep pool beneath them.

Tuamana made the midshipmen and Alice sit beside him, and all the best things to eat were pressed upon the visitors.

"I'm glad there's no more kava," Phil said in an aside to Alice.

After the feast, consisting of roast young pig, yams, breadfruit, roast chicken and many kinds of tropical fruit, Tuamana called Avao to him. The father talked to his daughter fully fifteen minutes. Phil noticed that both were serious and solemn. Alice had meanwhile risen and wandered away with two of her Kapuan girl friends, to gather the many variegated flowers and leaves so plentiful in the virgin forests. The lads, left to themselves, eyed in wonder the warrior chiefs seated now in small groups; some were motionless, a look of deep contemplation upon their intelligent bronze faces, while others talked, but with the same solemn expression.

Each wore the fighting head-dress of human hair, standing above a band of gleaming pearl-shell knobs clasped around the forehead. In the center of this marvelous, barbaric creation of a head-dress and to add picturesqueness and color, a bunch of long red feathers plucked from the boatswain bird waved in the breeze, while in the middle of each forehead, reflecting the sunlight as it filtered through the dense foliage above them, was a small mirror. About their necks were hung necklaces of the scarlet pandanus fruit. About their waists and hanging half-way to their knees were tapa and mats of finely woven grass. Below this their only covering, the indigo tattooing, was visible above their knees. Every warrior when he reaches manhood must submit to the old women tattooers; they cover the would-be warrior with their intricate designs from the waist to the knee, and to refuse to be tattooed is considered by a Kapuan a crime against manhood.

Many of the warrior chiefs, as they arose to cool themselves in the icy cold waters of the Vaisaigo, stopped and shook hands with the two officers.

"They seem to think there is a tacit understanding between them and ourselves," Phil said to Sydney as one chief after shaking hands brought his "fui"[1] to his shoulder as if it were a gun and took aim at an imaginary enemy. "I wonder if there is," he added thoughtfully. "That chap's sign language either means you are going to furnish him a gun, or that he and we are going gunning together after the same human game."

Avao, after being dismissed by her father, at once took Phil and Sydney by the hand, as is the Kapuan custom, and led the lads to the side of the pool.

In a few minutes the deep pool was a lively scene; men and women were jumping one after another from the top of the rock, full thirty feet, into the deep pool below.

After one or two jumps the lads decided that to watch the sport was more interesting than engaging in it. The icy cold water was deliciously refreshing but soon chilled them to the marrow.

"I see the reason for the plentiful use of

[1] Fui—A bunch of long horsehair on the end of a short stick—used by Kapuan chiefs to fan away the flies.

cocoanut oil," Sydney chattered as they donned their clothes. "The natives are in the water most of the time, either in the ocean or in one of these mountain streams, and the water flows off them like off a duck's back. We with our unoiled dry skins get the chill from evaporation."

"I'd rather have the chill," Phil replied, shivering to keep Sydney company.

"What is the reason of this meeting, anyway?" Sydney asked. "Has it a meaning?"

"I have an idea," Phil said, "that Tuamana was displeased with Avao for bringing us. Did you notice that as soon as Alice Lee was led away by her two girl friends, the chief called Avao to him? I think he was laying down the law to her."

"I think you must be wrong, Phil," Sydney replied shaking his head. "Every one seemed so glad to see us."

"The Kapuans are noted as the most generous and friendly nation in the world," Phil returned. "It's almost a religion with them. To hurt a stranger's feelings by rebuke or inhospitality is something rarely known to

have happened. But come on," he ended. "I see our party beckoning us."

They clambered up the side of the ragged rock and were soon where their ponies were tethered.

Alice called the midshipmen to her side.

"It's unfortunate for you that we came," she said, but her eager, excited face showed no sign of sorrow.

"I thought so," Phil exclaimed. "What is it, though?"

"The council has prepared a 'tonga-fiti'[1] on the Kapuan firm, and you two American officers having been here at the council, Klinger will not believe you are innocent." Alice could not keep back her joyful smile. "Klinger will probably say you put the Kapuans up to it."

"What are they going to do?" both lads asked in one breath.

"They have heard of the landing of the guns for Kataafa from the 'Talofa,'" she replied excitedly, "and to-night they are going to break into the store if necessary, open the boxes and seize the guns. They say that this

[1] Tonga-fiti—A native word for a stratagem.

is the only way they can overcome the great advantage in warriors that Kataafa has over Panu, their choice for king. Then they are to turn the guns over to Judge Lindsay."

"Gee!" Phil exclaimed. "What a box for us to be in. Who told you? Avao?" he asked.

Alice nodded. "Tuamana gave her a severe scolding and told her to say nothing, but of course you know women, and Kapuan women in particular, would die in keeping a secret, so she confided in all of us while you were in swimming."

"What are we going to do?" Sydney asked after they had mounted their ponies and were riding slowly down the steep bush trail.

"I wish Avao had kept her secret," Phil replied, annoyed. "Knowing this we must take our information to Commander Tazewell at once; but don't say anything before Miss Alice. She is too thoroughly Kapuan to understand our reasons."

Sydney readily agreed.

CHAPTER IX

O'NEIL'S OPINION

"SAY, Jack," Bill Marley exclaimed, as he and Boatswain's Mate Jack O'Neil, both sailormen from the U. S. S. "Sitka," ambled slowly along the beach road of Ukula, "where are we going to get off in this row everybody seems to think is going to start when Judge Lindsay tells Kataafa to climb down from his tinsel throne and take to the tall timbers?"

Jack O'Neil posed before his shipmates as an oracle upon Kapuan affairs. He had survived the wreck of an American war-ship in the great hurricane nearly ten years before, and had lived in Ukula many months until relief ships could come from the United States.

"I don't just know, Bill," he replied thoughtfully. "These Herzovinians always did mix things up so that it was only a guess what was going to happen next. You see," he added confidentially, "the Kapuan firm has

annexed about all the land along the coast, and in the valleys of this and other islands, and owning all this land they don't like to 'kowtow'[1] to a brown king with a topknot of false hair on his cranium, and a grass mat slung careless like about his waist line. Kapua for the Herzovinians is what they want, and they've had that idea stuck in their heads for a good many years."

"Well," replied Marley, "what do we care? Haven't we got enough land on our hands? Look at all the bad lands out west there in the states which we haven't got no use for, and then all the land in the Philippines that our little brown brother is fighting us to keep for himself. Ain't we got enough trouble without stirring it up way down here south of the equator?"

"What do you know about politics?" O'Neil exclaimed severely. "Come on into Mary Hamilton's shack, and we'll get her to 'buscar'[2] some nice green cocoanuts, and I'll tell you a little Kapuan history that'll put you wise to this intricate situation. I can only tell

[1] Kowtow—Chinese word for humbling oneself.

[2] Buscar—Sailor and soldier slang to hunt for.

you, Bill," O'Neil added playfully, "but I can't give you the brains to understand."

Marley smiled good-naturedly. "I don't know as you're so all fired smart," he replied. "When I've wasted as many years as you have, I suppose I'll know almost as much as you do." Marley was nearly ten years O'Neil's junior.

"Go to it!" O'Neil exclaimed admiringly. "You ain't entirely dead, are you? Don't be a music box all your life, Bill, that's my advice to you. Play yourself sometimes. There's nothing like a little friendly argument to keep the brain well greased up. Now you know, or you ought to know at any rate, that a gun that ain't worked every day will get all gummed up. That's the way it is with our brains if they ain't worked. I was afraid," he ended, "your head had drawn a sweetbread instead of a brain."

Mary Hamilton welcomed them to her home. Both sailormen apparently were old friends of this accomplished woman. In spite of her name she was not a "papalangi." Old Captain Alexander Hamilton, whose record in the islands was good but not entirely spot-

less, had taken Mele to wife some fifteen years before, and not many years after this happy event, sailed his small trading schooner out of Ukula harbor never to return. Some had said that "Alex" was living happily in the Fiji, but Mele, or Mary, as most every one called her, believed that he and his vessel had met disaster in a big storm at sea. Mary had finally remarried, this time to a chief of her own race. Captain Hamilton had owned considerable property in Ukula, all of which had come to Mary; so despite being a widow, she had been sought by many powerful chiefs. Mary was a linguist. She spoke both English and Herzovinian fluently and was as popular with one faction as with the other.

"How's it for a couple of cocoanuts?" O'Neil asked.

Mary nodded graciously and called loudly in Kapuan for the fruit.

Several girls came shyly forward and hospitably attended to the comforts of their guests. Mary sat on her mat facing the squatting sailors, and smilingly watched them quench their tropical thirst with the refreshing juice, drunk from the green cocoa-

nut itself, out of a small hole cut dexterously in the soft shell by two strokes from a heavy knife used for the purpose.

"Mary and I can tell you lots of history of these islands that never has been written in books," O'Neil said proudly after he had smacked his lips and thrown the empty cocoanut shell among others in the corner of the house. "Mary's present husband was fighting once with Kataafa against the Herzovinians. How's he going to fight this time?" O'Neil asked suddenly.

Mary put a shapely finger to her lips.

"I figure that he's got to go against his old chief. Mary Hamilton's husband never could fight against the Americans." O'Neil's voice was persuasively commanding.

Mary shook her head and patted her sailor friend affectionately on the shoulder.

"Fa'a Kapua," she replied. "Husband maybe fight on one side, wife still stay friend with other side."

"That's the Kapuan custom all right," O'Neil hastened to say, "but that ain't the kind of friends we're looking for. We want you and the old man too on our side; for,

Mary, we're going to be on the right side. We ain't looking for land. We ain't swiping native property and refusing to give it back. But hold on," he added interrupting himself, "I promised to give Bill here a lesson in Kapuan history. You correct me, Mary," he said, "if I wander from the truth. In spinning yarns these days if you just tell things that happened and don't invent some, your audience'll go to sleep before your eyes.

"The king that just passed over to the 'happy fishing grounds,'" O'Neil began, "was a long time ago, when first made king, no friend of the Herzovinians, so they kidnapped him and sent him into exile. A native chief named Samasese was put in the 'chair' by our friends in the Kapuan firm, and this same chief Kataafa then declared war on Samasese. Kataafa licked the king's army through the town from one end to the other. I saw the fight;—went along with 'em, and had to make a hundred yards in ten seconds flat, getting to cover when the Herzovinian war-ship opened fire on Kataafa's warriors. If she hadn't come to Samasese's help, Kataafa

would have run him clean over the point of Kulinuu into the sea.

"Those certainly were warm times. Eh, Mary?" O'Neil exclaimed enthusiastically. "We had a skipper named O'Malley in command of the old corvette 'Wyoming.' Stevenson, the great writer, was living then in that big bungalow you can see on the hill back of the town, and he got lots of good material for his books out of the way O'Malley handled the situation.

"O'Malley didn't care who was king, only he didn't cotton to the high-handed way the Herzovinians were running things and asking nobody's consent," the sailor continued, his Irish blue eyes sparkling with joy at the remembrance. "Samasese was 'treed' at Kulinuu and Kataafa with several thousand warriors was surrounding him. There was an American beachcomber named Blacklock who owned a house just outside of the Samasese lines. One night a party of natives from Kulinuu broke into his house to get some grub to eat. They scared Blacklock nearly into a fit. The same night he got on board the 'Wyoming' and told a horrible story of

brutality to O'Malley. The American commander landed his sailors the next day and encamped at the outraged house. The 'Wyoming' anchored in a position to shell the Samasese forts at Kulinuu. O'Malley, then, all day long wagged his Irish tongue as if it was mounted on a swivel and run by a six cylinder gasoline motor. All Ukula said that at sunrise the next day, unless Samasese dug out of Kulinuu O'Malley sure was going to use the king's camp for his annual target practice.

"The next morning there wasn't anything alive at Kulinuu except dogs and pigs. Samasese skinned out during the night, and was landed by a Herzovinian war-ship's boats down the coast there about six miles."

O'Neil took a deep breath and brushed an insistent fly off his forehead. "Kataafa wasn't a bit frightened at Herzovinia," he continued admiringly; "he's a great fighter, Bill, I can tell you, and if we get into a row with him there's going to be something doing. Kataafa then got a good start and went up against Samasese good and hard. A sad thing for old 'Kat.' Some of his warriors

tore down a couple of painted Herzovinian flags and used them for 'lava-lavas.' The outraged commodore swore vengeance and declared war on the spot. Kataafa had to run and get his men into a fort before the Herzovinian sailors attacked him. He was just about snugly fixed when a war-ship came trailing along close to the reef to bombard this fort and the native town all around it. Just behind this ship came O'Malley's ship, the 'Wyoming,' and the game old Irishman was on the bridge. He wore riding leggins, a sign that he was going to surprise somebody, and an angelic smile was spread all over his face. When the Herzovinian ship stopped and began to lower her gun ports and run out her guns for business, we followed suit. I thought we'd be on the reef, sure. O'Malley ran the 'Wyoming' inside the other war-ship and hung there between her and Kataafa's fort.

"The other ship made all kinds of foxy moves, but O'Malley covered the plate all the time.

"It was nearly sunset when we heard a voice pipe up from the other ship. Every-

body knew it was the commodore who was talking.

"'I'm going to open fire on my enemy in that town yonder in about five minutes. Kindly chase yourself.'" O'Neil glanced at Mary for a few seconds. "Those weren't the exact words, maybe, but that was what was meant, anyway.

"Captain O'Malley's smile got bigger. He took off his white helmet and waved it encouragingly.

"'Go ahead,' he returned. 'I'm in the front row and have paid for my ticket. Money won't be refunded at the box office this time.'"

"What happened?" Bill Marley exclaimed eagerly. "Did you have a scrap?"

"Did we have war with Herzovinia ten years ago?" O'Neil asked contemptuously. "No! of course we didn't, or even you'd 'a' heard of it.

"The other ship gave up the game at sunset and we followed her back to Ukula," O'Neil continued after Marley's interruption had been settled.

"A few days later the commodore tried a

new stunt: to disarm the natives this time. The Herzovinians landed at night on the big plantation of Vaileli. The Kataafa warriors got news that they were coming from some women in Ukula. I'll bet," he said insinuatingly, "that Mary Hamilton can tell you who the women were."

Mary smiled. "I was blamed," she replied. "My second husband was with Kataafa and I arrived a few hours before the sailors landed."

O'Neil nodded. "Yes," he said, "and there was an American who also was accused by the other side of carrying the news. Anyway, the Kataafa warriors attacked the Herzovinian sailors. Surprised them, killed about twenty and wounded twice as many. It was an awful shock to us all, and showed us we had been playing too close to a playful volcano. Such a thing had never occurred before. We thought the natives would not dare to raise their hands against the whites.

"I was on board another ship then; the 'Wyoming' had gone home to be paid off," O'Neil continued after an impressive silence. "The worst of it all was that the heads were cut off the poor sailors. It gave us all cold

shivers. We had thought the Kapuans were just good-natured children, and we found them heartless, brutal savages.—Excuse me, Mary," he apologized. "I'm not inventing now. That's the plain truth. When your people get really excited you ain't civilized. You're a lot of Apache Indians on the war-path.

"I don't know what would have happened if the hurricane hadn't come at that time. We found ourselves all on the beach and our ships wrecks. Over a hundred or more sailors were drowned, and the natives, both Kataafa and Samasese, came and risked their lives many times to save us out there clinging to the wreckage. Mighty near every man saved owed his life to the natives. That sort of patched things up. We lived ashore for several months, and every one was as friendly as you please. You wouldn't have known there ever had been a war.

"Lots of things, I reckon," he added finally, "have happened since I have been away, but what makes me laugh is to see the Herzovinians falling all over themselves to make friends with this Kataafa, and we, who were

his best friends then, falling all over ourselves to call him all the bad names we can think of.

"It all goes to prove, Bill, and you can take this from me without any sugar," O'Neil exclaimed, "that friendships among natives are only good business deals. There ain't no sentiment mixed up in it.

"What's all that row about out there?" O'Neil suddenly exclaimed, rising and going in haste to look out. He saw several native policemen grasping firmly a thin white man who was protesting vigorously.

"That's Missi Stump," Mary Hamilton cried aghast. "What is Johnny Upolu arresting him for?"

"I'm going to find out," O'Neil said determinedly. He did not like to see a white man in the clutch of the natives. To O'Neil's mind it lowered all the whites in the eyes of the Kapuans to permit such a thing as this.

Before Johnny Upolu and his two assistants could recover from the onslaught, the big sailor, followed closely by one a little smaller but as impetuous, had attacked their captive, and the policemen were sitting in the sandy road.

Johnny scowled darkly. A crowd had gathered, and like all crowds the Kapuans at once sided against the officers of the law, and were making insulting remarks to the discomfited chief of police.

"What do you mean by arresting an innocent man?" O'Neil exclaimed when Johnny Upolu had risen to his feet. "What's this island coming to, anyway? Now, you just beat it."

Johnny coaxed a smile upon his face.

"Got a warrant," he said, producing a large certificate and showing it to O'Neil and the crowd.

O'Neil glanced contemptuously at the official paper. He could not read a word, but he recognized the design of the seal.

"Take that out to Kataafa at Kulinuu," O'Neil said. "That don't go here. You've got to have either a lion or another breed of bird on your warrant to do business with us."

O'Neil considered the matter settled. His arm linked under that of Stump, they reëntered the house. The chief of police did not follow. An American sailorman on liberty was, to his mind, a dangerous object to meddle

with. It was a kind of explosive mixture which might go off upon contact.

O'Neil had never met Stump, but he sized him up as accurately as if he had been personally acquainted.

"You're from the 'Talofa,'" O'Neil said as Mary called for more cocoanuts and Stump composed his ruffled garments. "Why ain't you in her now? She's off on a pleasure cruise with a foreign nobleman."

Stump wagged his head knowingly. "The 'Talofa' ain't the breed to go on any pleasure cruise," he answered. "'Bully' Scott's got something on board that he didn't just like to put ashore in Ukula. I've been hiding in the 'bush.' I saw her go, so I started to find our consul to get my rights."

"Who's been abusing you except Johnny Upolu?" O'Neil asked. "Your countenance does look as if it had met a hard round object. Who did it?"

"'Bully' Scott," Stump replied bitterly. "But I'm quit of him now. He'll never get me on his ship again if I can help it."

"Stop swinging all over the compass," O'Neil said rebukingly, "and steady down on some

course. We want to hear what you got to say."

Stump laughed a mirthless laugh. "That's what I did," he exclaimed. "I steered her into Ukula when old man Scott thought he was heading straight for Saluafata. Fixed the compass, you see. Oh, it's a great trick."

O'Neil began to understand. "So Scott didn't intend coming in here last night?" he asked.

"Not he," Stump declared joyfully. "He was loaded with 'blacks' and guns."

"That's where you're dead wrong, then," O'Neil explained, "for he has landed everything and a foreign count has hired the schooner."

Stump gazed in wonder at the speaker.

"You don't seem to know 'Bully' Scott," he said. "Them guns are in the schooner, and he's going to land them to-night at Saluafata."

"Come with me," O'Neil commanded taking Stump by the arm. "You ought to know if any one does. What we've got to do is to put our captain wise at once. Is Scott an Englishman?" O'Neil asked.

"Not he!" Stump exclaimed. "He's an American. Comes from 'Frisco'; and the 'Talofa' was stolen at Hongkong from a Chinaman."

As they passed Klinger's store, Stump stopped to eye the boxes still piled on the porch of the store.

He shook his head as he continued behind the two men-of-war's men. "Nope, them guns must be on the schooner," he said to himself.

At the landing they met the two midshipmen, who had returned from their picnic and were waiting to return to the "Sitka."

O'Neil explained the situation.

Johnny Upolu had followed his liberated captive at a safe distance, and now seeing the two officers, respectfully approached, holding out the warrant to Phil, and indicating Stump with his finger.

The lad examined it carefully.

"What has he done?" Phil inquired. "This warrant must be respected, anyway." He turned to Stump. I'll see the captain at once, and you being an American, he will ask to have you released if you have committed no crime."

Johnny Upolu put his hand on the prisoner's shoulder and led him quietly toward the jail. A few yards had been traveled when Stump stopped and called.

"May I speak to you a moment, sir, in private?"

Phil joined him, and the policeman moved away a few feet.

"Keep these here things for me," he said. "You can show 'em to your skipper."

Phil received a package of soiled letters and put them into his pocket.

Upon arrival on board the midshipmen went at once to Commander Tazewell's cabin. They found him deep in thought.

"I have just left the consul's house," the commander said after waving the lads to seats. "He tells me all the natives believe that the guns have been landed. The Herzovinian consul a few days ago said he would help to prevent a war, and to-day he writes to the American and English consul that he must reserve his decision until Judge Lindsay has given his judgment. Kataafa was summoned by Judge Lindsay to appear before him at one o'clock to-day and he deliberately waited two hours

before he appeared, a Kapuan way of showing his independence. It all looks ominous," he added ruefully.

Phil began at once to tell of the native council at Jumping Rock and the "tonga-fiti" decided for that night. He also called in O'Neil, who had been waiting outside the cabin, and that worthy told in picturesque language the story of Stump.

"Here are some letters this man Stump gave me, and said I could show them to you, sir," Phil said after O'Neil had completed his narrative.

Commander Tazewell examined the much soiled and torn correspondence, while the lads and O'Neil waited in silent interest to learn of their purport.

"These corroborate the very thing I have been anxious to prove," Commander Tazewell exclaimed joyfully. "Scott's a full fledged American. He cleared from Suva in the Fiji under the American flag. There's the paper," handing to Phil an English colonial document. "What's this?—a clipping from an English paper," he added wonderingly. "Schooner 'Ta-Li' stolen by a Yankee pirate."

"Stump said Captain Scott had stolen the 'Talofa' in Hongkong," O'Neil said quietly.

Commander Tazewell glanced quickly over the remaining letters.

"Stump has brought us the evidence too late," he said disappointedly, spreading out a letter on his desk. "The guns are paid for," he read aloud. "Godfried and Company, our agents, will load them upon demand from you. Remember, you take them to Saluafata at night and send word to me on arrival." Commander Tazewell stopped reading, and gazed off wistfully. "That was from Klinger to Scott. He'll be unloading them to-night," he added, "unless they are already in the Kapuan firm's store. If I'd had these letters this morning, I'd have sunk the 'Talofa' before I would have permitted her to leave the harbor, foreign flag and all, until after I had given the vessel a thorough search."

CHAPTER X

RUMORS OF WAR

COMMANDER TAZEWELL and the midshipmen dined that evening with Mr. Lee and his daughters.

"The evidence is all in, commander," the American consul said as the party sought the cool sea breeze on the "lanai,"[1] facing the harbor. "The chief justice will probably render his decision in the morning."

Tazewell expressed his gratification.

"And the Herzovinian consul?" he asked. "Does he still refuse to help to prevent a war?"

Mr. Lee's face became grave.

"The three consuls held a meeting this afternoon after you had gone," he said in reply. "The English consul and I unconditionally agreed to support the judge's choice. Mr. Carlson seemed ill at ease. He

[1] Lanai—A covered porch.

could not be made to give a direct answer on any question, and all of a sudden he declared he had an important engagement and bolted from the room. We saw that he was under a serious mental strain."

"I see," Commander Tazewell said quietly. "Have you an idea what the decision will be?" he asked.

Mr. Lee remained silently in thought for a moment. "Personally no, but my confidants among the natives all say Judge Lindsay is against Kataafa. I know the judge to be an honorable and unbiased man," he added in defense of his friend. "That we Americans are inclined in our sympathies for Panu would have no influence with him at all. This unimpeachable testimony of the demand made some years ago by Herzovinia and Kataafa's recent discourtesy to the court in keeping the judge waiting, besides practically refusing to agree to abide by the judge's decision, may influence a judgment against him."

"Then Carlson must have received instructions to uphold the judge's decision, only in case it is favorable to Kataafa," the commander said. "Now that it appears to be

going against him, he refuses to stand with you and your British colleague."

Mr. Lee nodded his head. "That seems to be the one possible solution."

Commander Tazewell had given the consul that morning a full account of the "Talofa." Now he brought up the subject of the meeting of the Panu warriors and their "tonga-fiti."

"I had at first thought to advise Tuamana against any action by the Panu warriors," Commander Tazewell said, "but on second thoughts I decided it was better to keep my hands off and trust it to you. If those boxes landed from the 'Talofa' do contain guns, they ought to be seized, but not by natives, even though they say they will turn them over to the judge." Mr. Lee nodded his agreement with the sentiment.

"As soon as I got your note telling me of the 'tonga-fiti,'" Mr. Lee replied, "I went at once to Tuamana. I advised him against action. You see, commander," Mr. Lee declared earnestly, "a forcible entry into the Kapuan firm's store will bring the Herzovinian sailors ashore to protect their property."

"Good. I'm glad you saw Tuamana,"

Commander Tazewell assured him. "And he agreed to carry out your wish?" he asked.

"He listened very patiently and seemed to agree," Mr. Lee said. "Then he told me that he now knew the guns were not at the store, but still on the 'Talofa' and were to be landed to-night at Saluafata."

"That is what this man Stump also claims," the commander exclaimed. "By the way, thank you for your promptness in having the poor fellow released. O'Neil has him in charge on board the 'Sitka.'"

While the consul and the commander discussed the affairs of the nations, the young people had gone to the landing, where O'Neil had brought the sailing launch, its sails spread and flapping in the gentle breeze.

Miss Lee had brought her banjo and Avao, who joined them, held an Hawaiian "ukalele," a small guitar with only three strings. As the sail filled and the launch gathered way, their young voices charmed the night with a variety of plaintive Kapuan songs. Several canoes, with both men and women natives, paddling lazily across the bay, joined in the songs. It seemed like fairyland to the midshipmen.

They sailed around the men-of-war in turn, serenading; then shaped their course for Kulinuu Point on the western side of Ukula.

"What do you know new?" Phil asked Alice during a lull in the music.

"That the guns are to be landed from the 'Talofa' at Saluafata to-morrow, and that Kataafa leaves Kulinuu with all his people to-night," she replied.

"Where did you hear this?" he asked wonderingly.

"Avao told me, but every one in Ukula knows it," she answered. "There's no difficulty learning secrets. No secrets are kept. The difficulty is to recognize a secret from a trick."

"What do you mean?" Phil inquired, mystified.

Alice laughed lightly thrumming the cords of the "ukalele" Avao had relinquished.

"When you have a secret which you know will be found out before you can act," she explained, "why, you deliberately spread a lot of rumors which will confuse your enemies. I have heard that the arms were to be landed at Vaileli, and that Klinger had said he was

going there. That Kataafa was going to Saluafata and also Melie. That the arms were already in Kulinuu. That the arms were on the Herzovinian war-ship and would be given to Kataafa at Saluafata to-morrow, and that the arms were in the boxes on the porch of the Kapuan firm's store."

"Well," Phil exclaimed, "that is rather confusing. And you decided that the arms would be landed in Saluafata?"

Alice nodded. "I was all this afternoon at the 'lookout' on Mission Hill," she said. "I saw the 'Talofa' far out on the horizon, her hull invisible, only the top of her masts in sight. With this breeze she could have gone out of sight. She's waiting for darkness."

"And Kataafa is leaving Kulinuu to-night?" Phil asked.

"I got that from Mary Hamilton," she answered. "Klinger's wife is from Saluafata. Her father is the chief of that village. She came to Ukula this morning from the Vaileli plantation where Klinger ordinarily lives. She left in a canoe for Saluafata."

Phil gazed in wonder at the slim girl beside

him. "You're a marvel," he exclaimed admiringly.

Alice smiled. "I love to work things out," she acknowledged. "You men seem so incapable, while the motives of the natives are really so easy to follow."

The boat was sailing near Kulinuu Point. Phil glanced across the intervening water.

"Let's land and walk home," he said to Alice. All agreed readily.

A passing canoe was called alongside the deep draft launch and the passengers quickly transferred.

"All right, O'Neil," Phil said. "You may return to the ship. We'll go back to town on foot."

They landed on the pebbly beach and walked across to the main street leading between the double row of royal palm trees. It was a deserted village. Every one had departed.

Avao found an old woman crooning in the corner of a house and asked her a question.

The old hag recognized her and turned upon her fiercely.

At the Kapuan firm's store, on their way

home, the party again stopped. Avao's quick eye caught the gleam of metal from the porch. She deliberately walked forward until a challenge brought her to a stop. Phil saw a Herzovinian sailor, gun leveled, walk toward the girl, who was standing stock-still several paces from the steps.

The challenge had brought several more sailors to the door. Many natives, living in houses in the surrounding bush, quickly gathered, and their childish curiosity pressed them forward. Before five minutes had elapsed a crowd of nearly fifty warriors and maidens were surrounding the front of the store; and as their number swelled, the crowd grew more bold and advanced toward the house. The sailors stood their ground with guns held ready.

"This is awkward," Phil exclaimed excitedly to Sydney. "Something's got to be done at once or we'll have the 'tonga-fiti' after all. Follow me." He advanced, pushing his way through the crowd. The midshipmen were in uniform, and the natives gave way readily before them. Phil had almost reached Avao's side, when a loud report of a rifle

discharged brought him to a stand. Several more shots were then fired in rapid succession. The natives instantly backed away; but when they found no one had been hurt they stopped and began talking and gesticulating wildly.

Phil seized Avao by the arm and turned quickly back toward the road.

From out on the water a rocket soared into the sky.

"Well, of all the mysteries," Phil exclaimed as they hurried back toward the consulate. "I wonder if the guns are in that store after all?"

At the landing the Herzovinian cutters were beginning to arrive as Phil and his party passed. They saw a company of sailors with two officers quickly form and move at double time up the road.

The lads soon saw Commander Tazewell and the American consul hurrying toward the town.

"What has happened?" Commander Tazewell demanded of Phil as they met.

Phil breathlessly explained. "I suppose the war-ship thought it was an attack," he

ended. "But why are the guards there at all unless the guns are in the store and not on board the schooner? Kulinuu is deserted," he added. "We landed there and walked home."

"Kataafa probably has the guns by now," Commander Tazewell said to the consul in a low voice which Phil could barely hear. "Is this a plan to trick us into committing ourselves before the chief justice's decision is rendered?"

"There's no need of our going further, commander," the consul said, nervously regarding his daughters with a fond eye and fearful of danger to them. "Come back with me. We can talk more privately."

A figure proceeding from the landing was soon recognized as the British captain.

He was given a full account of the incident, and appeared very much relieved.

"When I heard the shots and the answering rocket from the war-ship," he exclaimed, "I at once imagined that Kataafa was attacking Ukula. I have my men ready and the boats lowered," he added. "Thought I'd come ashore to look about first. I was going to camp them in the British consul's yard."

The party, with the exception of Avao, returned to the American consulate. The "Tapau," with an innocent smile and a cheery "Talofa, Alii,"[1] slipped away by a "bush" trail.

"What we need, Tazewell," the British captain declared as the "lanai" was reached and all were seated quietly, "is information. We must send out scouts and find out where this Kataafa has gone and what that fellow Klinger is up to. Our mysterious count," he added, "is not out purely for pleasure."

"I have been thinking over a plan," Commander Tazewell replied. "This Captain Scott is an American citizen and is sailing under the Herzovinian flag. His mate, Stump, who deserted him, has given us evidence that he came into Ukula with 'blacks' for the Kapuan firm and guns for Klinger. All circumstances seem to show that we shall find everything we are searching for at Saluafata. That's the Herzovinian port, leased to their government, and I dare not send there to arrest him. But I can send a party by land to observe and bring us news."

[1] Talofa, Alii—Good-night, sir.

"Right-oh!" the British captain agreed. "I think I'll send my steam pinnace to fish along the edge of the reef toward Saluafata. There's rare fishing there. Have you ever trolled for these big Kapuan bonitos, using pearl shell hooks?" he asked. "I have a lieutenant who is keen on it."

Preparations were made at once for an early start on the morrow. The distance to Saluafata by trail was about fifteen miles, and by water scarcely ten. A code of signals was decided upon to facilitate communication between the American land party and the British steam launch. Mr. Lee took upon himself the supply of ponies. The two midshipmen and O'Neil were selected by Commander Tazewell to go.

"I'll send them openly," Commander Tazewell said, as the naval officers rose to take their departure from the consulate; "in uniform, of course."

Alice Lee endeavored in vain to win her father's permission to go along with the midshipmen. "I may be able to help them," she declared. "I know the trail and speak Kapuan."

The midshipmen and O'Neil were on the dock at an early hour the next day. There they found three intelligent little ponies waiting them. Phil carried a sketch chart of the road to be taken.

As they passed through the Matautu district of Ukula, they caught a glimpse of Alice's wistful face gazing upon them from the porch of the consulate. She waved them a good-bye, while all three raised their caps in return.

"She's a plucky girl," Sydney exclaimed, "but I feel more free without a girl along. We can't tell; there may be a chance for a fight before we get back."

O'Neil chuckled. "No fear," he said. "A Kapuan wouldn't raise his finger against a naval officer. Unless," he added grimly, "these scheming white traders put them up to it."

The trail was none too good for their ponies and the going was slow. At the village of Tangali they stopped and got a black boy, a laborer on a near-by plantation, to gather for them a few green cocoanuts. The boy readily climbed a tall slender tree with the agility of a monkey.

"All he requires is a tail," Phil said as the black boy dropped the fruit into their hands and then came rapidly down to receive his reward.

At the next village, Paulei, which was deserted, as was the former town, of all except old women and children, O'Neil pointed out the very spot where the American Captain O'Malley had tricked the Herzovinian warship in its attempt to bombard the Kataafa warriors nearly a decade ago.

"He knew to the king's taste how to handle a foreigner, and they all liked him for it too," he exclaimed admiringly.

"The Irish have a way with 'em," Sydney said, smiling broadly.

"Not at all, sir," the sailor replied. The joke apparently passed him by without notice, except for a comical deprecating glance at its author. "He couldn't be bluffed and was always on the job. If it hadn't been for him the Herzovinian flag would be flying over these islands to-day."

"Maybe it would be a good thing," Phil said, and Sydney agreed quickly, to lead O'Neil on.

"It ain't the islands, sir; that ain't what's

making me want to see the foreigners get left," O'Neil explained. "It's the way they go about trying to get 'em."

"I suppose, O'Neil," Sydney interjected, "that you think it would have been more gentlemanly and in keeping with the dignity of a great country to just take them and let the British and Americans like it or lump it as they pleased."

"Exactly so, sir," O'Neil declared. "That's the way I figure it ought to be done."

"That's because you're Irish, O'Neil," Phil told him jokingly. "The Irish always seize the government. When they can't control it, they're against it. The nation that gets these islands," he added, "desires to be right before the world. To do so she must have a very good excuse to seize them. All three nations would be glad to take an option on the group, but when one appears to be gaining ground, the other two combine against her."

"That's it exactly, Mr. Perry," O'Neil exclaimed. "But Herzovinia is gaining among the natives. Even though they are taking their land, they are making money for the

natives. The Americans and English are standing in the way of Kapuan prosperity."

"If one nation owned these islands by itself, it could make them a paradise," Sydney exclaimed enthusiastically. "I have never seen such magnificent country in my life. It seems a natural garden, and back there on the mountains," he added, glancing toward Mount Lautu with its crater-shaped summit, "they say are the finest and most valuable hard wood trees in the world."

"You may be sure," O'Neil confided, "Herzovinia is going to get this island. A statesman, way back in the eighties, wrote that in his note-book and every one of them 'savvys'[1] the plan and is pulling for it. If we just set our eyes on the other island, Kulila, with the harbor shaped like a shoe, called Tua-Tua, and give up our share in this one, England would have to pull stakes and get out."

Both midshipmen laughed. "We might have known O'Neil would be against the English," Sydney said.

"What has England ever done for the Irish?" O'Neil replied defensively.

[1] Savvys—Understands.

The three horsemen crossed two fair sized streams, stopping to allow their ponies to plunge their hot noses deep into the cool mountain water. From the next hill the harbor of Saluafata opened out before them.

"There's the 'Talofa,'" Sydney cried joyfully. They searched the ocean for the steam launch, but the land and trees shut out the view to the westward.

"Hark!" O'Neil exclaimed. They listened. From below them the faint music of singing came up to them. "There's where the people are, down there," he added.

"War canoes," O'Neil said pointing. The beach was hidden by the foliage, but as O'Neil spoke several large canoes had suddenly appeared, being propelled swiftly alongside the anchored schooner.

Phil urged his horse onward.

"Excuse me, sir," O'Neil exclaimed nervously. "Those glasses you have there," indicating a pair of ship's binoculars Phil wore slung over his shoulders, "will give us all the information we want without going any further into the lion's mouth."

Phil gazed upon the sailor in surprise.

"Do you think there is danger in riding down there?" he asked.

O'Neil hesitated. "That depends," he answered thoughtfully.

"Upon what?" Sydney insisted.

"Upon what the white men who are fixing this show intend doing," the sailor said.

"We can't turn back now," Phil declared. "It would look as if we were afraid."

O'Neil nodded. "I guess you're right, Mr. Perry," the boatswain's mate replied grimly. He knew from experience the danger in appearing before an army of armed warriors, who have been keyed to the highest pitch of savage excitement.

The three horsemen urged their steeds forward and descended the hill road leading down to the populous town of Saluafata.

CHAPTER XI

HIGH CHIEF KATAAFA

KLINGER, after leaving Kataafa and his chiefs at Kulinuu, took the trail leading behind the town of Ukula. He desired if possible to keep his movements secret, although he felt sure that before long it would be unnecessary. The movement of the Kataafa warriors by both land and sea must be seen by the natives of the other faction.

As he gave his pony his head, he dwelt happily upon the success that had so far attended his efforts.

The manager and his native companions stopped at every village en route. They found the warriors collected ready to hear his words. Then after he had ridden on, the entire village made ready to follow afoot or in canoes within the barrier reef.

It was long past midnight before he reached the village of Saluafata. His native companions left him, and he entered a large native

house built off by itself overlooking the bay and but a few hundred yards from the beach.

A native woman, comely and dignified in European costume, met him at the door.

"'Talofa's' not in?" he asked in Kapuan.

On the table a cold supper was waiting him. After eating, he stood for several minutes gazing upon the dark waters of the bay.

"Don't wake me until the schooner anchors," he said to the woman who was then clearing away the remnants of his meal. "My bed ready? I'm dead sleepy."

After Klinger had gone to his room the woman took her master's clothes and proceeded to the little stream a few hundred yards up the beach. There she began to wash the soiled garments. As the day dawned the settlement commenced to awaken from its slumber. Fishermen launched their canoes, paddling out to the reef to seek for shell-fish. Native woman after woman appeared, squatting down in the shallow brook to cleanse her own and her husband's slender wardrobe. A babble of musical voices rose above the noise of the brook and the distant thunder of the surf on the reef.

"Missi Klinger come?" asked one woman as she noticed in the early morning light the clothes being washed by Klinger's wife.

Fanua nodded joyfully. She was very proud of being the wife of the manager of the Kapuan firm. She was a comely woman, much younger than Klinger, but the first bloom of youth had vanished. There yet remained a certain charm of movement. Every gesture was full of grace, the effect of her long training as the Tapau[1] of Saluafata, where, until Klinger married her, she had led the village in all its dances and processions.

The throng of women continued to increase. All plied questions to the smiling Fanua, who answered them all good-naturedly.

When would Kataafa arrive? What was going to happen? Had the chief justice said who was to be king? Could they go ahead and build their new house? Was there to be war? Would the islands be taken by Herzovinia?

The women of Kapua are the source of all gossip. Nothing can be kept secret from their intelligent intellects. Nor can any of them

[1] The Tapau is the leader of the dance called the Siva-Siva, that requires much grace and dexterity.

keep a secret an instant. It is their stock in trade. As they washed, as they beat out the tapa cloth, as they wove the sennit string from cocoanut fiber, as they gathered the thatch for the roofs of their houses, or as they swept clean their houses and adjoining space, their voices were always raised to gossip with their nearest neighbors. Nothing missed their watchful eyes. News travels fast. An incident happens in one village and in an incredibly short time the news has been passed from house to house and village to village until the whole island has buzzed with the knowledge.

The sun had been up several hours when the "Talofa" crawled slowly through the narrow entrance to the harbor, between the reefs, and anchored scarcely a stone's throw from the shore.

The rattle of her chain awoke Klinger. He arose at once. Fanua was at work preparing breakfast. He watched in silence from the window. He saw a boat lowered and shortly shove off for the beach. It grounded in front of his house. He waved a greeting. The count and Captain Scott stepped ashore.

Fanua welcomed them at the door with the musical Kapuan salutation "Talofa, Alii," and then hastened away to finish preparing the breakfast with her own hands, a duty never entrusted to another.

"Your wife?" the count asked. Klinger nodded, but his hasty flush told plainly that the acknowledgment was a slight mortification before this superior gentleman.

"I'm here for life," he replied, as if he deemed it necessary to explain. "Kapua is no place for a woman of our race to live, and I needed a companion. I was lonely. Fanua is a queen, in spite of her brown skin."

The count put out his hand in ready sympathy. Klinger took it gratefully, and no more was said.

"Did you get that hound, Ben Stump?" Captain Scott asked eagerly after a short silence.

Klinger nodded. "The chief of police was after him. He'll be found unless he left Ukula."

"He took with him some papers," Scott explained. "I didn't find it out until a few minutes before we sailed, and the count would

not wait. Have you any one you can trust to send back to get them? If the American man-of-war captain reads them before I get clear of these islands, it's all over with me and the 'Talofa.'"

"We'll have you clear in short order now," Klinger encouraged. "Have you breakfasted?"

The count and Scott declined to partake of the tempting food set before them. Klinger ate hurriedly, his wife serving him, while the count and Scott walked to the door, from whence they looked out upon the increasingly busy scene. The village of Saluafata was being invaded from all directions by the followers of Kataafa. They were arriving by road, long lines of almost naked warriors and half clad women, and the beach was already crowded with the canoes of those who had come by water. Each village as it arrived selected its own spot for preparation.

Klinger soon joined his companions. Such gatherings of the natives were old stories to both Klinger and Captain Scott, but to the count the sight was one of absorbing interest.

Kataafa himself and his more important

chiefs were in the "Malae," or public square of the village, when the three papalangi arrived there.

The greeting between the wily old Kapuan rebel and the count was ceremonial to an extreme. Klinger had previously made it plain that this "papalangi" was the special ambassador of his great nation beyond the sea—a nation which was much more powerful than both England and America put together.

The would-be king made the count sit next to him, and then the ceremony of kava drinking was begun. This solemn custom of preparing the root and mixing the kava can never be dispensed with at any ceremony in which the Kapuans take part. To omit it would be a grave ceremonial blunder.

Kataafa and his important chiefs and their women sat under the spreading branches of an umbrella tree, whose horizontal boughs covered with dark green foliage gave shelter from the scorching sun to nearly two hundred men and women. The warriors sat in serried ranks, close to their chosen king, while the women fringed the edge of the densely packed crowd.

The various villages formed their companies where they had camped upon arrival, and very soon they could be heard approaching. Faint singing was heard in the distance, becoming stronger as the groups advanced. At last the war chant burst out in all its barbaric melody. The maidens led, two abreast, their Tapau in front, dressed in her most elaborate creation of fine mats, tapa and girdles of sweet-scented grass. Her skin, shiny with oil, resembling soft satin, and her locks polished to the deep bluish black of the raven's wing. Upon her head rested grotesquely the Tapau head-dress of human hair and shells of pearl. Around her throat were string after string of shells and beads. Following the maidens came the warriors, each carrying a staff to represent a rifle.

As each village arrived they danced wildly, keeping time to their quick, inspiring chant, the women, led by their graceful Tapau, swaying from side to side in perfect time, while the men brandished their wooden guns, in pantomime of battle.

Then the villagers with a sudden burst of throaty sound, resembling the final roar of a

wave dashing upon the reef, deposited their food offerings and withdrew to their appointed places, from where they would take part in the great "fono,"[1] called by their candidate for king.

Count Rosen gazed in undisguised admiration upon this wonderfully drilled assemblage. All were now sitting immovable on the ground, their deep lustrous eyes turned in the direction of the inner circle of chiefs, where sat their calm leader.

After several minutes of impressive silence a chief rose to his feet and struck the attitude traditional to the Kapuan of one who wishes to be heard. He carried a "fui" of white horsehair in his right hand, while his left rested upon the knob of his orator's staff.

He talked for nearly fifteen minutes, while the multitude listened in breathless attention.

"He is Kataafa's talking man," Klinger whispered to the count. "He has told them that you are here to help crown their chosen king."

Captain Scott was becoming restless. These native "fonos" he knew were often long drawn

[1] Fono—Native council.

out affairs. He was anxious to be free, to sail away from the Kapuan Islands. He did not relish being stopped by an American warship.

"Can't you cut this short?" he asked Klinger.

Klinger shook his head.

"There's no danger," he assured Scott. "I have spies out, and when they bring me news of any movement which may threaten us, there will be time enough. The Kapuan cannot be hurried in his deliberations. We must be sure these people are all on our side before we give them the means to accomplish our purpose."

"How about my pay for carrying your guns?" Scott asked.

Klinger nodded. "I have your check in my pocket," he replied quietly. Then he rose to speak to the assemblage. His words were eagerly heard by the chiefs, and after he had finished the talking man in a loud liquid voice gave Klinger's meaning to the crowd. There was a murmur of disapproval from several quarters. Chiefs arose at many points in the crowd, their talking men beside them. It was

considered undignified for a chief to speak for himself.

Klinger's placid face remained calm. The count showed plainly his anxiety, while Captain Scott smiled grimly.

"A little previous, I'm thinking," Scott said, shaking his head knowingly.

"What did you say to displease them?" the count demanded of Klinger.

"I told them that for the support we should give them they must refuse to trade with any one but us, and that Herzovinia would hoist her flag at Kulinuu to protect them from the anger of the English and Americans."

"Is that all?" the count exclaimed.

Klinger hesitated. "I also said that land claims of our people must be acknowledged by the king before the arms were given them."

The count showed great displeasure.

"What land claims?" he asked.

"All claims," Klinger replied. "The Kapuan firm holds many miles of land claimed by English, American and Kapuans. The firm cannot give this land up."

The count bit his lips.

"It must be now exacted as a condition,

count," Klinger declared insistently. "To give in upon any point would be considered by the Kapuans a sign of weakness."

"You have delayed the thing unnecessarily," Captain Scott growled. "They'll argue this point for hours."

Klinger was obdurate.

"The harbor of Tua-Tua is one of our claims," he said to the count in an undertone. "The American government succeeded in leasing some land there for a coaling station. That is the purpose of this condition. The Americans must leave that harbor."

The count appeared puzzled.

"After we have taken over the islands," he said, "then we could ask the American government to give up their lease."

"I have lived among these people many years, count," Klinger explained determinedly. "The island of Kulila, in which is Tua-Tua, is for the most part loyal to Panu-Mafili. After Kataafa becomes king, he must bring that island under control. We must help him to take the warriors across the straits and supply him arms and ammunition to fight successfully against Chief Moanga, who

is a very formidable warrior. Otherwise we shall not control all of the islands."

While the "fono" was still in progress a messenger arrived with information of an important character.

Kataafa heard the messenger in silence. He did not show by a single muscle that the news displeased him.

"The chief justice rendered his decision this morning," Klinger told the count in a whisper. "He has decided that Panu-Mafili is the king of all Kapua, and all who take up arms against him are declared rebels."

The news had a quieting effect upon the natives after Kataafa's talking man had given it to them in his loud, eloquent words.

"A lucky strike," Captain Scott exclaimed. "Now I think they will agree."

Kataafa, through his talking man, gave his word that all the conditions made by the Herzovinians were accepted.

The white men rose and left the council. The temper of the people, as they passed out among them, was again happy. Smiles and hand-shakes met them on every side. The

war shout was begun and thundered out in perfect time.

"Kataafa Tupu-e-Kapua[1]—ah!"

The people had declared their willingness to be declared rebels, and undertook to defy the chief justice.

Klinger's face shone with delight. The first move was successful. Only one more was necessary. Kataafa holding Ukula, while the few weak bands of loyal natives were driven into the bush by his well-armed cohorts, all the enemies of the Kapuan firm would be confounded. "So long as our consul has the backbone to hold out against the other two consuls," he said aloud, "under the treaty no action can be taken by the warships. Kataafa, with nearly five thousand fighting men, can take Ukula and establish solidly his claim to the kingship."

Captain Scott shook hands with Klinger and the count. "This check I'm giving you," Klinger said insinuatingly, "is subject to recall if I find you have not played square. You understand."

Scott smiled sadly. "You see, count, what

[1] Kataafa is the king of Kapua.

it is to have enemies who constantly defame one's character. Have I ever acted in any other way but square with you?" he asked. The count shook his head.

"I haven't examined the guns nor checked them over," Klinger said by way of explanation. "I hope they are as you represent."

Scott bowed and walked quickly to the beach, where his boat and crew were waiting.

The "fono" was breaking up. The natives, by villages, were marching down to the beach; their weird chants could be heard on all sides. Great war canoes, paddled by as many as forty warriors, were swiftly launched, and sent across the water to the "Talofa," where they ranged alongside, tier upon tier. Kataafa, with half a dozen veteran chiefs, dressed in white shirts and "lava-lavas," their fly-flaps or fouis held over their right shoulders, marched slowly down the street. The high chief stopped at the steps of Klinger's house. He now talked without his talking man, but in Kapuan, and to Klinger.

"Kataafa has taken the advice of his white friends. They tell him now there can be no war. Kataafa loves his people; he loves his

enemies." As he spoke his left hand played nervously with a little golden cross on a fine gold chain slung about his neck. "If he believed there would be war he would go away. But the 'Alii papalangi'[1] know best, from their greater wisdom. Kataafa does not understand papalangi thoughts. He understands only Kapuan. You tell him to go to Ukula and make himself king in house of Laupepe, who is dead. Very well; Kataafa will go, trusting that all you have said will be true."

Klinger listened, greatly touched. All that he had told this honorable old warrior Klinger believed would come true. No other contingency, he thought, could possibly arise. Kataafa could march unopposed into Ukula and make himself king. The English and Americans could not land their men to oppose unless the Herzovinian consul also agreed to this action, and Carlson had given his word to the count. There might possibly be a few shots exchanged, and the foreign war-ships might feel called upon to land guards to protect foreigners and their property, otherwise

[1] Alii papalangi—White chiefs.

the war would be only a skirmish. Then Kataafa, as king, could go to the count or the consul and ask for the protection of the Herzovinian flag. That would mean the annexation desired for so many years and always prevented by the jealous English.

"If it comes out differently than I have told you," he replied gravely, "I shall be greatly surprised. I have told you exactly what I believe, and have kept nothing back."

Kataafa seemed satisfied. He smiled and bowed ceremoniously.

Several natives came suddenly down the road, holding up their hands and shouting loudly:

"Papalangi!"

Klinger ran out into the roadway to get a clearer view. Several hundred yards up the crowded thoroughfare, moving slowly through the native groups, were three American naval men on horseback. They came straight toward him; passed him without sign of recognition, but doffed their caps in answer to Kataafa's greeting and rode out upon the beach of Saluafata.

Almost at the same instant Captain Scott,

on board the "Talofa," was much perturbed at the sight of an English war-ship's launch that had suddenly appeared at the entrance to the harbor.

One of the riders on the beach produced a big red flag which he had been carrying and began calmly waving it, regularly. Then another flag of similar color was shown in the launch. The sailor, sitting quietly on his horse, speedily sent a flag signal. Having finished, he waited until the flag on the launch was waved in return. Then the three horsemen rode leisurely along the beach, apparently but little interested in the marked activity before their eyes.

Klinger and the count were dumbfounded. The high chief's countenance was greatly perplexed.

Klinger knew only too well the significance of that signal, and the old warrior had made a shrewd guess at the message conveyed.

A single word from Klinger, and those three men might never return to Ukula.

Klinger saw at once the great danger in which the Americans had put themselves. He called loudly, "Fanua, Fanua."

His native wife appeared, smiling and bowing gracefully. He spoke to her in English, a language which Kataafa did not understand. "Go to those papalangi," he ordered huskily. "Tell them if they don't ride back, away from Saluafata, at once, I cannot be responsible for their lives." Fanua obeyed without question. Klinger watched her reach their side and saw them stop and turn their horses' heads—then, apparently, calmly consider the message brought them. Many warriors had gathered; their attitude seemed to Klinger to be growing every minute more hostile toward the intruders.

CHAPTER XII

SMUGGLED ARMS

As the Americans had ridden their ponies through the throngs of natives in the street of the town of Saluafata, the cheery "Talofa, Alii" had been conspicuous by its absence. Instead Phil's interested glance was met upon all sides by haughty and sullen stares from the dark-eyed natives.

"They're up to some mischief," O'Neil whispered, "and they don't like our being here. That's sure."

The road or street led now along the sea beach. The schooner "Talofa" lay anchored a few hundred yards distant. Nearly a dozen long narrow-flanked war canoes hovered near or alongside.

"Guns," Sydney exclaimed excitedly. "Look, they are being passed down by hand into those boats alongside." One very large canoe manned by nearly forty naked savages had just shoved off from the schooner. Its

crew was singing a stirring song, keeping perfect time with their paddles as they propelled the canoe slowly down the beach.

"They've blackened their faces," O'Neil declared anxiously. "You know what that means?"

Phil nodded, his heart beating rapidly, and a thrill passed through him at the thought. To blacken the face was a declaration of war.

"Ride straight on," Phil commanded, as they suddenly made a turn, in following the street which now ran at a sharper angle toward the beach, and saw before them Klinger and the count surrounded by natives in chief dress. "I can see the British launch. She's just at the reef near the entrance to the harbor."

"There's Kataafa himself," O'Neil exclaimed excitedly in a low voice. "The old man with white hair and moustache."

The midshipmen gazed upon him in awe mixed with admiration. They had not seen him at such close range before. They saw a man straight and sturdy, despite his sixty odd years of age. His countenance was not fierce as they had expected to find it, but in-

stead benevolent and kingly. Every other face turned toward them showed upon it only too plainly distrust, anger and resentment, but the high chief Kataafa alone simply smiled a welcome and as they drew near said "Talofa, Alii, Meliti." [1]

All three horsemen doffed their caps.

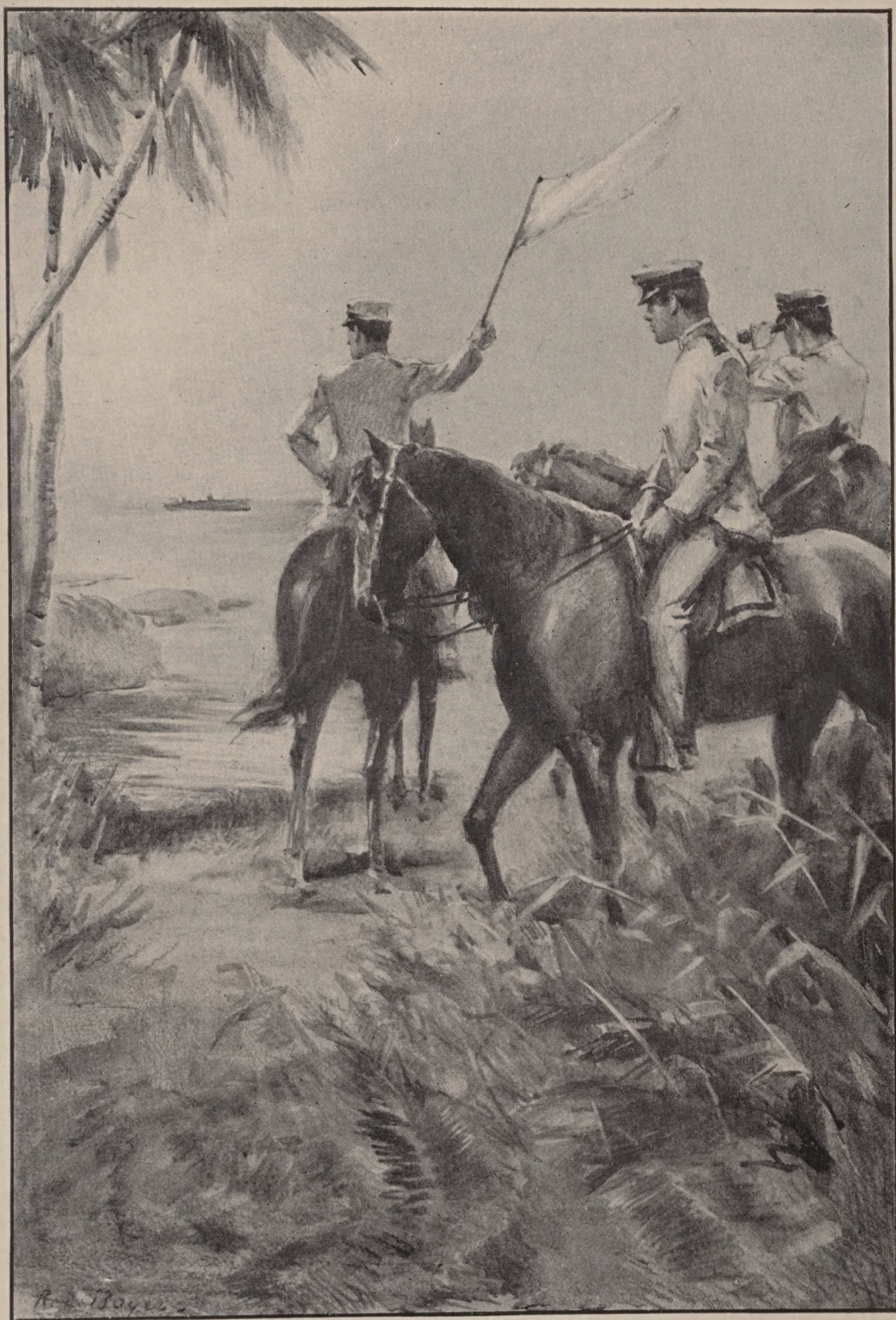
"Talofa, Alii, Kataafa," Phil returned.

"Call up the boat, O'Neil," Phil said; his voice was unsteady. "Say Kataafa has guns, and warriors have blackened their faces." They were now on the sandy beach close to the water.

O'Neil drew from his stirrup leather the red wigwag flag which he had brought along for the purpose of sending news quickly back to Ukula by the steam launch. He began at once to wave it over his head and scarcely a second elapsed before a similar flag appeared in the bow of the tiny launch nearly a mile away.

"They were on the job," Sydney exclaimed, while O'Neil went to work rapidly to send the signal given him a moment before by Phil.

[1] Meliti—Native for American.



HE BEGAN AT ONCE TO WAVE IT

"Sent and received, sir," he reported as he flourished the flag in a farewell signal and then calmly rolled it up, sticking it back into his boot leather. Then for the first time the sailor noted the menacing attitude of the people about them.

A woman's voice was calling them from the edge of the crowd. She was endeavoring to reach their side.

"Missi Klinger say you better ride back quick," she cried, her handsome face ashen with fear for the papalangis. "Come quick with me; it might be death to stay longer."

Fanua put forth her most eloquent English. She had been educated at the mission school, but like most natives was shy in speaking a foreign language. She had taken Phil's bridle rein, and now led his horse through the crowd while the other two followed.

"They won't harm us," O'Neil declared comfortingly, although he did not believe his own words. "The signal has roused their distrust of us, that's all."

"We're spies," Sydney exclaimed. "Is it unnatural for them to wish to harm us?"

"There's no war, sir," O'Neil said, "so

we can't be spies. And besides, we're in uniform."

"Then under the laws of war," the midshipman replied, "they can take us prisoners."

"The news will get through just the same," O'Neil said gladly, "and Commander Tazewell will have warning in time to carry out whatever plan he has decided upon."

Klinger had left his companions and had advanced to meet the returning Americans. He walked beside Phil's horse, while Sydney and O'Neil pushed forward their ponies to hear. The manager's face was the color of his white clothes.

"Don't stop," he warned anxiously. "Even the king Kataafa could not hold his people if a fanatic should raise the cry to kill you."

Phil did his best to look haughty and unconcerned, but he could feel his knees tremble against his pony's flanks.

"You've started your war, I see," he mustered his voice to say, endeavoring to put into it a note of scorn and defiance.

Klinger did not reply to the accusation.

The Americans were not slow to obey Klinger's directions. Count Rosen scowled

darkly as they passed him. The chiefs gazed upon them with angry eyes. Even Kataafa no longer wore his welcoming smile, but his eyes were still mild and kindly. To Phil's surprise the high chief fell into step alongside his pony and trudged silently beside them; the other chiefs closed in after O'Neil and quietly followed. Fanua, the native woman, darted back to her house, upon the steps of which the count was left alone.

Upon reaching the top of the hill, Kataafa and his chiefs stopped while the high chief waved a dignified salutation. "Talofa, Alii," he said. Klinger went on a short distance farther. He had by this time regained his self-control. The danger had passed.

"Tell your captain," he said earnestly to Phil, "that Kataafa has nearly every native in Kapua on his side. Tell him I say don't let the English throw sand in his eyes. He has the one chance in his career to do something for his country. If he throws over the English and supports us, Tua-Tua and the island of Kulila might be given to America, and Kataafa will be king without bloodshed."

"I know nothing of my captain's plans,"

Phil replied distantly, "but I will deliver your insulting message. I hope to be able," he added still haughtily, but with a forced smile, "some day to repay your civility to us in Saluafata." He saluted stiffly and put his pony to a trot.

The Americans trotted their steeds until the little animals were breathing heavily from their exertions. Then Phil allowed his pony to walk. They were passing through a native village. Beyond the reef the first of the war canoes was in sight, and an occasional shout from an overwrought warrior as he paddled came distinctly to their ears. A curl of smoke at the entrance of Vaileli Bay in the general direction of Ukula marked the progress of the returning steam launch.

It was nearly two in the afternoon before Phil and his party reached town. In the road before the British consulate they saw drawn up a company of British sailors, while on the lawn others were setting up their white tents. The British captain and his consul hailed them from the porch.

"We were getting worried about you," he called, waving a greeting. "You see we've acted upon the information you secured."

Phil stopped and told the Englishmen briefly what they had seen, and then continued toward the landing.

Alice Lee spied the horsemen and ran out joyfully to meet them.

"I began to be frightened," she owned. "I am deathly afraid of a Kapuan when he blackens his face."

Phil could now smile easily, but he acknowledged that the sensation of being surrounded by a swarm of excited warriors, bent upon war, had not been a pleasant one.

The midshipmen were brought into the consulate, while O'Neil continued to the landing. He had caught sight of the American sailors marching up the road, and as he was in the landing detail, he feared some one might replace him unless he returned to claim his rights.

Commander Tazewell and the consul were on the porch, and the consul's daughters, looking slightly pale over the exciting news brought by the steam launch, which had arrived an hour earlier, led the newcomers forward to tell their story.

"The chief justice gave his decision a very

short time after you left town," Alice told them breathlessly. "The news was taken to Kataafa by a fast canoe. I watched it from my 'lookout' until it went inside the reef off Vaileli."

"Kataafa and Klinger must have known it when we saw them, then," Phil said to Sydney. "Klinger thought we knew it, too; that's why he gave us the message."

"What was it?" Alice asked eagerly, overhearing Phil's aside.

"To cut loose from the English and join his country in supporting Kataafa," Phil told her. "He would like to see America disregard the chief justice's decision."

"That looks as if Klinger and his crowd were worried over the outcome," Alice said thoughtfully, while the midshipmen nodded their heads in agreement.

Mr. Lee seemed very uneasy while Phil as spokesman gave a minute account of their ride to Saluafata. He told of the hostile attitude of the warriors and Klinger's fears for their safety, and he spoke admiringly of the old high chief Kataafa, who had acted as their personal body-guard until the edge of the town

had been reached. Phil also did not hesitate to deliver Klinger's message which he had haughtily scorned but agreed to repeat to his captain.

Commander Tazewell listened gravely, but to outward appearance was unmoved.

"Klinger has shown us his game," he said after Phil had ended.

The midshipmen would not accept the invitation to stay longer. They were hungry and dusty after their long ride, and pined for a bath and clean clothes.

As they proceeded toward the boat landing, they gazed admiringly at their sailors, pitching tents, erecting shelters and making all arrangement for a protracted stay on shore. Lieutenant Morrison stopped them to hear the news they had brought from the Kataafa camp. The lieutenant was in command of the American sailors landed to protect American lives and property that would be in grave danger when the rebels attacked Ukula. Ensign Patterson, a big raw-boned young man, with a happy, irresponsible disposition, but greatly loved by all for his generous nature and rash fearlessness, was Lieutenant Morrison's assist-

ant. He waved a joyful greeting from a mass of luggage, the assorting of which he was busily directing.

"It certainly looks like business," Sydney exclaimed as they left the busy scene behind and arrived in sight of the landing, where they found a boat was awaiting them.

They did not tarry long on the ship, but were soon again on their way ashore.

As the midshipmen passed again through the American camp, half-way between the landing and the American consulate, they espied O'Neil's soldierly figure mustering the guard to be posted for the protection of the west end of the Matautu district of the town. The English sailors were guarding the eastern end.

The boatswain's mate brought his men to attention, and gravely saluted the passing young officers.

Lieutenant Morrison and Ensign Patterson were inspecting their position. A Colt gun commanded the main road and another the road leading inland along the Vaisaigo River. Temporary barricades were being built back of the camp, facing the bush, behind which a

stand could be made if by chance the attack should come from that direction. This, however, was unlikely, owing to the dense underbrush and the boggy soil.

Phil and Sydney greatly envied the officers with the sailors. They were sure that there would be fighting soon, and very much feared that they would find themselves out of it. However, Commander Tazewell had shown the midshipmen that he trusted them and was willing to give them hazardous and important duty, and they had reason to congratulate themselves that the duty had been performed to their captain's satisfaction.

"What about Captain Scott and the 'Talofa'?" Sydney suddenly asked. "I thought the captain was bent upon capturing him."

Phil shook his head. "I suppose he figures there are more important things for us to do than to chase the 'Talofa.' He's landed his guns and gotten away by this time. Stump is still on board the 'Sitka,' eating his head off."

"Captain Scott certainly played his game well," Sydney declared. "He's a Yankee, all right. No one else would have been able to

get so handily out of the mess occasioned by Stump's navigation."

At the consulate they found only the consul's daughters.

"They are having a meeting to decide what is to be done," Alice told them. "The new king Panu-Mafili and his chiefs just came to ask protection. They have scarcely five hundred warriors, and Avao says many of those are disloyal, and all their guns are old and rusty. They bury them, you know, during peace, so they won't be stolen."

"Imagine that," Phil exclaimed, "and in this damp soil. But where's the meeting?"

"At the house of the chief justice. The Herzovinian consul sent word he was ill and couldn't attend," Alice replied. "Of course that means he won't agree with anything we decide to do."

The meeting apparently did not last long. The midshipmen saw the young king, accompanied by several chiefs, among them the loyal Tuamana, in company with Mr. Lee and Commander Tazewell, approaching. At the consulate gate the natives solemnly bowed and departed.

"Kataafa has sent in word," Commander Tazewell told the lads, "that he will enter Ukula and reëstablish his government at Kulinuu. The king, Panu, desires to abdicate to prevent fighting, and has asked our advice."

"And we advised him to yield," Mr. Lee added.

"There's nothing else we can do," Commander Tazewell said sorrowfully. "If we had sufficient force we could support him, because he is the rightful king; but two hundred sailors are not enough to hold the town, much less be able to seek for and attack the rebels, numbering many thousands and all well armed with new and modern rifles."

"Then there will be no fighting after all," Phil exclaimed. And the evident disappointment in his voice caused a general laugh.

Commander Tazewell shook his head. "Some of the chiefs, among them Tuamana, declared they would not submit, and would defend Kulinuu, but I believe when they find themselves outnumbered their ferocity will subside. We shall guard the Matautu district,

and I've sent word for all peaceful people to come here for protection."

The midshipmen were further told by their captain that Mr. Lee had given over a wing in his big house, and he was sending word to his steward to bring over a hand-bag of clean clothes, so the midshipmen scribbled a note to one of their messmates to send along a valise full of necessities.

"It will give my daughters and myself," Mr. Lee said gratefully, "a feeling of great security to house you under our roof, and I hope we can make up in our hospitality for the lost comforts you enjoy on board ship."

Phil and Sydney exchanged amused glances. Their little two-by-four cabin compared to a big, airy bedchamber on shore was certainly funny.

The Herzovinian sailors that had been landed to guard Klinger's store were now reënforced and camped near their own consulate in the Matafeli district of the town. A flagpole had been erected, and the Herzovinian flag floated alongside the Kapuan standard not far away at Kulinuu.

"One's afraid and the other dare not," Syd-

ney exclaimed as he and Phil lounged luxuriously in the capacious wicker chairs in their big bedroom. "Herzovinia thinks she isn't strong enough to back Kataafa openly and we know we are not numerous enough to resist him."

"I don't think the native enters into the question, really," Phil declared. "You see, Syd, a fight in which the white people might be arrayed on both sides would certainly mean a diplomatic rupture at home. That's what the consuls and naval commanders are trying to avoid. Herzovinia is deeply involved in this game. Commander Tazewell hasn't said so, but I believe he thinks that Count Rosen is really a diplomatic agent sent here to create an intolerable situation. His government is tired of this triumvirate control and wants to own Kapua herself."

"I wish the English and Americans had taken the bull by the horns and sent word to Kataafa that if he attacked Ukula they would fire him out by force. I don't believe then he would dare attempt it." Sydney's eyes flashed.

"Those natives we saw to-day," Phil re-

plied, "didn't look as if they could be so easily intimidated. I believe the decision made is the best. We have a big cruiser coming with an admiral on board. When she arrives we may have strength enough to uphold the decision of Judge Lindsay. One nation has broken the treaty. Consul Carlson, in refusing to help the other two consuls to uphold the decision, has shown that he is partial to Kataafa."

At dinner that evening nothing but Kapuan affairs could be discussed. No one thought of anything else. The district of Matautu appeared like an armed camp. Hundreds of natives had arrived for refuge, bringing in all their valuables. The balmy air reeked with cocoanut oil, and the musical songs of men and women as they squatted under their hastily constructed shelters were heard on every side. The terrors of war rested lightly upon their childlike minds. To them war was only a festival, an occasion for song, dancing, kava drinking and visiting.

Before eight o'clock that evening many wild rumors were brought into the camp by

the women. Some of the refugee women had husbands on one side and some on the other. Among the Kapuans, women are neutral, and are free to go freely between the hostile camps.

Alice and the midshipmen mingled with the natives in order to gather all the news brought in. All indications showed that Kataafa would be as good as his word, and would attack that night.

The first part of the evening, however, dragged on and everything seemed quiet in the direction of the native town and Kulinuu where a few hundred loyal natives had undertaken unaided to uphold the rights of their chosen king against the attack of the rebel hordes.

Suddenly the startling rattle of musketry drifted down on the light breeze from the other side of the bay. Shouts and cries of defiance and anger could be distinctly heard through the still night air. Kataafa had broken his sworn pledge made solemnly and in writing never again to resist the constituted authority of Kapua. Three hundred odd sailors of three great nations listened to the raging of

the unequal struggle. Among savages, might is always right. There was no doubt who would be king of Kapua when the day dawned, Judge Lindsay and the treaty notwithstanding.

CHAPTER XIII

UKULA ATTACKED

THE midshipmen hastened to tell Commander Tazewell the thrilling news of the attack. They found him, however, on the porch fully dressed together with the consul and his daughters.

"I feel terribly concerned over Judge Lindsay," Mr. Lee exclaimed while all listened tensely to the fearful sounds of combat coming so distinctly through the otherwise quiet night. The refugees huddling in the bush and among the palm groves were all hushed to silence, harking to the unequal battle raging nearly a mile away. "He refused to leave his house to come to us. He thought his belongings were more precious than his life, and feared if he left his house it would be looted and destroyed."

There was no sleep for those at the American consulate that night. The heavy firing was not, however, of long duration. Within

the hour it died away, except for an occasional shot. Then fires appeared at many points along the entire water-front of Ukula. The rebels were burning the houses of the loyal natives.

The guarding sailors were alert, and although war parties appeared and came so near as to be challenged by the outposts, they stopped only to parley, and explained that the papalangi were safe and would not be attacked. They were seeking only the followers of Panu-Mafili.

The light of day revealed much of Ukula in ruins. Stores and houses owned by Americans and English had all been looted and the houses of the loyal natives were in ashes.

Half-naked warriors, their hands and faces smeared with the life blood of their victims, their eyes rolling wildly in savage ecstasy, paraded the streets carrying on bamboo poles the gory heads of their victims.

The Matautu and the Matafeli districts of the town were undisturbed. In the latter place lived the Herzovinian merchants and their consul. The Herzovinian sailors prevented the war parties from entering the

Matafeli district. Over five thousand warriors, unrestrained and unorganized, roamed the town and surrounding country, pillaging and firing their guns in savage license.

Many shots had passed very close to those within the American lines, and as the morning progressed the desultory firing became more frequent and dangerous. Several of the native refugees had been hit by stray bullets.

While at breakfast news came from the British ship by signal that many refugees from the battle-field had swum off to the ships and been received on board; among them the king Panu-Mafili and Chief Tuamana.

An hour later Mary Hamilton burst in upon Mr. Lee excitedly with the startling intelligence that Judge Lindsay in his big house on the Malima road was besieged by a war party under Chief Tuatele, and that the excited natives were swearing vengeance upon the judge. Mary had stolen through the pickets during the night and had listened, hidden close to the camp of the rebels at the cross road leading to the judge's residence.

"He must come in now, whether he wishes

to or not," Commander Tazewell declared. "I'm going to send a guard after him."

Lieutenant Morrison and twenty-five men were quickly assembled and departed to rescue the chief justice. Phil and Sydney were permitted to go along.

With their arms at the shoulder and bayonets fixed, the guard marched away, the officers leading. Reaching the Malima road they turned inland.

Hundreds of warriors carrying both guns and head axes made way for them without a thought of raising a hand to stop them.

When they arrived in sight of the judge's house, nestling among numerous fruit trees, and half hidden from the road, Lieutenant Morrison deployed his men into a single line. Then placing himself and the officers in front they advanced directly toward the low stone wall surrounding the grounds of the house.

Phil noted as they approached that many of the trees had been destroyed, hacked almost in two with sharp axes, or stripped of their fruit to appease the appetite of the hungry warriors.

Suddenly the Americans were confronted

by over a hundred natives who had no doubt been apprised of their coming.

Lieutenant Morrison stopped to parley. Chief Tuatele walked forward, holding himself proudly erect. Mary Hamilton had gone along to interpret.

The lieutenant explained his errand and ordered the rebel chief to withdraw from American property at once. The intimidation of the white man's unspoken threat was sufficient. In spite of protest from his followers Tuatele obeyed, and the band of sailors entered the compound unopposed.

The chief justice met the lieutenant on his door-step. His face was pale, but resolute. He refused to budge, and his plucky wife applauded his brave decision.

"I shall never turn my back upon them," he exclaimed. "A judge is answerable only to God. I have done my duty by my conscience."

Argument was of no avail. Lieutenant Morrison was in a quandary.

A sudden shout of savage triumph broke from the rebels outside the compound. "Tonga fiti, tonga fiti," brought the argu-

ment to an abrupt end. The judge's house was on fire. While the Americans had been attempting to persuade the judge to leave, a small party of rebels had stolen into the house from the rear. That end of the house was now ablaze.

The judge and his wife were dumbfounded.

"All that we own in the world is in that house," the judge exclaimed, a dry sob in his voice. Phil and Sydney turned to the lieutenant inquiringly. Much could yet be saved. That officer understood the unspoken question. He flung a glance at the jeering savages.

"Yes," he said, "half of us go in and save all we can."

Within a half hour the beautiful home was a heap of ruins, but on the lawn was piled nearly all the judge's possessions. His entire library, his most cherished possession, was saved.

"Lieutenant," the judge said as he and his wife gazed mournfully at the ruin of their home, "I'm afraid I must now change my decision and go with you. It should be rare for a judge to have to reverse his decision

except on the occasion of new evidence, and in this case the evidence is only too evident."

The midshipmen, O'Neil and some of the sailors had dragged from the stable the judge's carriage; the horses were gone, stolen by the rebels during the night.

"We'll load it up and come back for a second load," Lieutenant Morrison decided as he saw the carriage was too small to carry everything. "I'll remain behind with half the men."

The sailors willingly manned the shafts and dragged the loaded carriage out of the compound. The natives gazed lustfully at its contents. Their blood was boiling for rich loot, and the silverware of the judge's table whetted their appetites.

Phil observed the sudden movement even before he heard Mary Hamilton's cry of warning, and a sharp command brought a dozen bayonets level with the advancing breasts.

"Tell them, Mary, if they come nearer I shall fire," he cried out earnestly. In his heart he was terrified, for he knew that unless the threat were heeded the Americans must be massacred. Once the Kapuan war-

riors are aroused, they will kill until no enemy is left to resist them. The fate of the Herzovinian sailors told him by O'Neil flashed into his mind, and the thought was far from comforting.

Lieutenant Morrison, scarcely a hundred yards away, realized Phil's danger, and quickly deployed his men to attack the enemy on the flank. No other solution but fight occurred to any one. A single gun shot must have been the signal for the battle to begin.

Tuatele had seen the pantomime from a distance, and heard the excited harangue of the native woman Mary. She had been soundly berating her countrymen.

"I'd think they were gods," he exclaimed in savage admiration as he watched the sailors, their guns at their shoulder and apparently calm, "but I know they die and gods don't die. But Kataafa order no kill papalangi sailors." Then he raised his voice and gave an order to retreat, and the entire war party, uttering in unison a savage cry of defiance, suddenly turned away and quickly disappeared into the bush.

The judge and his wife were hospitably received by Mr. Lee and his daughters, and their belongings when they all arrived were carefully stored away in the Lee home.

At lunch time a flag of truce appeared, carried by a small party of natives approaching from the direction of the town. The guards went out to meet them and escorted them within the lines.

A large white envelope was then handed to Mr. Lee.

The consul eagerly broke the seal and read the contents; his hands, holding the paper, shook with suppressed indignation. All waited anxiously to hear what it was that was so disturbing.

"It's outrageous," he declared as he handed the letter to Commander Tazewell. "Kataafa has made Count Rosen his prime minister, and asks the consuls to recognize the new government. The letter's in English, but signed by the rebel chief."

Commander Tazewell studied the letter thoughtfully. "Well, sir," he said grimly, "it looks as if it was Hobson's choice with us."

A footfall on the porch heralded a visitor, and the British consul was soon seated at the lunch table.

"Commander Sturdy has gone off to his ship to interview the natives who took refuge with him last night," he began hurriedly, his face unnaturally flushed with excitement. "Did you also get one of these impertinencies?" he exclaimed showing a crumpled letter in his hand, a duplicate of the one Commander Tazewell was still holding.

Mr. Lee nodded. "Yes," he replied, "and Commander Tazewell has cleverly showed me that we are confronted by a fact, not a fancy. Kataafa holds the power. He is the 'de facto' government of Kapua, and if we don't recognize it, anarchy and license will continue until we do."

"I hear Judge Lindsay has been burnt out and a fight between the rebels and your sailors was narrowly averted," the British consul exclaimed. "What are we coming to in Kapua? And it has all been brought about by these scheming mercenary merchants."

Mr. Carlson's portly figure approaching by

the path from the road dissolved the party at the lunch table. Miss Lee retired to look after Judge Lindsay and his wife. The latter's nerves had been greatly shaken during the trying ordeal through which they had both passed. Fanatical natives had surrounded their house during the night, threatening the judge hourly with death and torture. Only the iron will of the man in face of imminent danger, and a resolution that awed the savages, prevented them from beginning an attack which once started must have ended in the death of the chief justice.

The midshipmen and Alice adjourned to the garden out of ear-shot from the council of the representatives of the great Powers.

"There won't be any doubt of getting Mr. Carlson to agree upon recognizing the new government," Alice exclaimed heatedly. "I suppose that's what he came for."

"He must approve his own work," Sydney replied. "There'll be no chance for an American or an Englishman, though, under this government."

"It's a nice travesty upon the sacredness of treaties," Phil exclaimed in righteous indigna-

tion. "The great civilized nations sign a solemn treaty to direct the government of Kapua. A chief justice is appointed, confirmed by all three nations, to decide finally all questions arising among the natives. The consuls, representing the three Powers, are by the treaty bound to uphold the judge's decisions, and to use their war-ships to enforce those decisions. A decision is rendered. One consul not only refuses to join in upholding it, but repudiates it openly."

"Is it really as black as that?" Sydney asked thoughtfully, appealing to Alice. "You know the natives. Whom do they want for king?"

"Almost all want Kataafa," Alice acknowledged. "He is, as I told you, a god in the natives' eyes. I can't see why he cannot be king if his people wish it, but Judge Lindsay has studied the case for a month, and so decides."

"Of course," Phil exclaimed, "the war is all a put up job. I would, if I were able, indict for manslaughter every one of those responsible for this rebellion or who selfishly refused to avert it lawfully. It made me ab-

solutely sick to see those ghastly heads on poles and know that for every one a life had been sacrificed to satisfy the selfishness of white men."

"Some one," Alice said reverently, "will have to account for those deaths before the great tribunal some day."

They saw Mr. Carlson bow formally and leave the consulate.

"It didn't take long," Sydney said as they watched him go, mopping his perspiring face as he passed through the gate and turned toward the town.

"Do you know," Alice said thoughtfully, "he is a very kind-hearted soul. I feel very sorry for him, because he is now shouldering the bad deeds of others."

This short meeting of the consuls brought a temporary stability to affairs in Kapua. The three consuls now formally recognized the "de facto" government nominally under Kataafa. The count was to be the prime minister; adviser to the king. Judge Lindsay was to again occupy, if he would, the office of chief justice. The deposed King Panu-Mafili and his chiefs, if they would go to Kulinuu,

and humble themselves before Kataafa, were to be permitted ashore, otherwise they must remain in the war-ships.

This all the loyal chiefs refused to do, and for their safety the war-ships were forced to keep them on board.

The next day Kataafa was formally crowned at Kulinuu, but no salute was fired in his honor. The morning after the coronation the midshipmen and Alice watched their sailors gather up their belongings and return on board their ship.

"They'll be ashore again before very long," Phil prophesied. "The 'Sacramento,' one of our big cruisers, will be on the way here with an American admiral on board. I have an idea that he will not be content to see the islands get away from us without an argument."

The town of Ukula was a sorry sight. Many valuable native houses were in utter ruin. Many stores owned by the white men had been looted. Empty cans were scattered about everywhere. Those canned delicacies of meats, soups and vegetables, much prized by the natives, had been consumed or carried

away. Tin goods in Kapua went by the name of "peasoupee," because the first cargo of tinned goods ever received in the islands was of the pea-soup variety.

Armed natives were encountered on every hand, but their faces were no longer blackened, and the savage ecstasy of war had partially subsided.

Phil stopped a smiling native and asked him by signs to allow him to inspect his gun. Alice spoke his own language to him, and the warrior proudly gave his cherished belonging into Phil's hands.

"It's a brand new 'Snyder,'" Sydney said as they both handled it; "but look, he has taken off the sight. Thinks it's a useless ornament."

"Probably is," Phil replied. "In bush fighting a sight is probably of little use unless the native is trained to use it intelligently."

The three walked slowly along the main street. At the gate of the Herzovinian consulate in Matafeli, they saw Count Rosen. All were surprised to receive a cordial smile, as he raised his hat to Alice.

"Look," Phil exclaimed, "the boxes are

still on the porch of the Kapuan firm's store."

All had stopped to gaze upon the mysterious boxes yet unopened. A crowd of natives, laughing and jostling each other, covered the wide porches encircling the store, and spilled over into the courtyard.

"What is the cause of their merriment?" Sydney asked. Alice had drawn near a group of native women who had stopped in front of the store to gossip together. They turned and answered her question by pointing to a large print pasted on the side of the house.

The midshipmen could not curb their curiosity and drew nearer to get a closer look.

"I call that a low-down, contemptible advantage to take of friendly nations," Phil exclaimed, beside himself with indignation. What he had seen was a colored cartoon from an English paper representing Herzovinia kicking both Johnny Bull and Uncle Sam from off a tropical island into the sea.

The conservative Sydney would have stayed his impetuous chum, but Phil, before his friend could realize his intention, had strode excitedly forward, pushing the yielding na-

tives from his path. Sydney saw him take his penknife and deftly cut the picture from the house wall where it had been roughly pasted. Then calmly rolling it up, Phil returned and joined his astonished companions.

"What have you done?" Sydney exclaimed in alarm. "They'll consider it an insult." But Alice answered the question, admiration shining in her excited face.

"He has only prevented an insult going any further," she said.

They were about to retrace their steps to Matautu when Klinger suddenly appeared from the interior of the store. He glanced first in amusement at the Americans, and then up on the side of the house. The smile faded. He asked a question of a native and received an answer. His face became suddenly pale with rage. His gaze fell upon the cartoon rolled up in Phil's hand. Scowling darkly he advanced, one hand outstretched.

"You will please hand over that picture," he ordered sharply.

Phil squared toward the manager, holding the picture behind him.

"I decline to give it to you," Phil replied

in a voice he managed to hold steady. "That is no place to display such a picture at this time."

Klinger was a man who had all his life governed with the overseer's whip. During his fifteen years in the South Seas his strong will had never been seriously thwarted. What he wanted he took, using force if necessary. He was a big man, somewhat inclined to stoutness, but the outdoor life he had lived, in the saddle for days at a time, riding over the plantations, had given a hardness to his added flesh. The person confronting him, who declined to give back his own property, was a mere youth. In his white flannels he sized up of much slighter build if a trifle taller than the angry manager. Personal violence was far removed from Phil's thoughts.

Klinger, with a snarl of rage, was upon the midshipman before he could evade the rush. One of the manager's great hands reached for the lad's throat, while his other arm endeavored to draw in and crush the slight boy against his massive chest. Sydney and Alice could only cry out in their surprise and alarm.

The next moment Klinger appeared to plunge head first into the roadway beyond, as if sprung from a catapult. The manager lay unconscious, a huddled heap of brawn and muscle, while Phil, very pale and trembling violently in apprehension, gazed upon his stricken foe.

"Jujitsu," Sydney exclaimed admiringly, yet in alarm, as he surveyed the inert form of Klinger in the roadway.

CHAPTER XIV

COUNT ROSEN TAKES CHARGE

THE signal victory won by Kataafa and his warriors and the acknowledgment from the Powers increased many-fold his trust in the two papalangi, who had so ably advised him and supplied the necessary weapons for success. As the old chief surveyed the work of destruction, however, his heart sank within him. The fear of the war-ships and their thunderbolts, and a vivid recollection of the last war against the papalangi spurred him to consult that man of few words, Count Rosen, whom Klinger had said was vested with high powers from that great nation beyond the seas, more powerful than both England and America.

The English and Americans, he knew, would soon be crying aloud for retribution. Their property had been destroyed by his warriors. The life of the chief justice, an American, had even been endangered, and

his valuable house unlawfully burned. To Kataafa, the papalangi were terrible people. Those in Kapua he did not fear; he had seen that they could be killed and beheaded as easily as men of his own race; but the intangible nations that protected them, sending war-ships "bursting through the clouds," as the Kapuans express the slow approach of a ship coming up over the sea horizon—of these Kataafa stood in mortal fear.

As the blood lust subsided among his warriors, already gossip bared its disquieting head. Some said many war-ships of England and America would come and destroy, as if by a volcano, their beautiful islands.

Kataafa with his trusted chiefs marched solemnly to the Herzovinian consulate at Matafeli. Count Rosen had taken up his abode in the consulate. He received the chiefs in silence, and sent word at once for Klinger to appear to act as interpreter. The count had that morning been appointed by the rebel king his prime minister, and the three consuls had acknowledged, in grudging terms, the "de facto" government, as they pointedly expressed it.

Klinger did not appear and finally the native messenger returned with the information that Missi Klinger was very sick. The count excused himself to the chiefs, telling them to wait, and hurried away to see what was the matter. There on a low couch in the store office he found the manager, but just regaining consciousness. A white doctor was attending him, examining his entire body carefully for serious injuries. The story of the encounter with the Americans was told most graphically to the count by a number of native eye-witnesses, and each described the strength of the "young David" as greater than that of "Sampson" himself. The Kapuans are well up on the Bible and glory in airing their knowledge.

Klinger, when he came to himself, made a great effort to rise, thinking his antagonist was still before him, but the doctor's strong hands, applying wet bandages to a very ugly contusion over his temple, upon which he had struck in his fall, held him quiet. The count had taken a seat at his side. He wore a displeased frown as he listened to the babble about him.

"Clear them out, please," he exclaimed irritably. The women were sent away, all but Klinger's wife, Fanua, who waited patiently to be told what to do.

Klinger at length sat up and gazed about him. He raised a hand to his aching head and felt the great bulk of wet dressing plastered by the doctor over his cut. Then he read the displeasure evident in the count's face.

"They did me," he exclaimed. "One of them hit me with a black-jack."

"You've made yourself the laughing stock of the town," the count declared angrily. "I've heard the story. It was simply science against unwieldy beef."

"I'll show the young aristocrat," the manager began to bluster, but the count cut him short impatiently.

"You'll just drop this thing where it is," he commanded authoritatively. "It was a childish piece of folly to put up that cartoon, and the youngster has my admiration. You should thank your stars you haven't a broken neck instead of only a small cut in your hard head. He used jujitsu on you."

Such words did not sound sweet to Klinger's ears. He was unaccustomed to being taken to task thus wise, and the sullen expression on his face showed plainly his displeasure.

"Get yourself in shape," the count added, his voice less severe in tone. "Kataafa and his chiefs have come to the consulate, and I won't trust any of these professional native interpreters."

Klinger rose slowly to obey the summons. The count waited impatiently on the porch of the store. He was not slow in seeing that the encounter had hurt their cause. Anything that can be held up to ridicule by so much is seriously injured. For policy's sake he would have liked to severely punish this young, athletic American. To do so would help the prestige of the new government in the natives' eyes, but he feared that such high handed measures might injure the cause for which he was working by opposition from the Powers.

When the count and Klinger reached the consulate the rebel chiefs laid before them the plan which they had been discussing among themselves. On request of the count,

Kataafa so far transgressed the ancient Kapuan custom as to talk without the delay of speaking through the "talking man," while Klinger readily translated his well chosen and eloquent words.

He desired the count to be at the head of the government as governor. To take the place of chief justice of Kapua—to hoist the Herzovinian flag by the side of the Kapuan flag and by so doing receive the support of their war-ship. Further, he had written a "cry"[1] which he desired be sent to the king of the count's country, asking annexation. He said the Kapuans were but children, and Kapua was but a bone between three hungry dogs. He feared the coming of more war-ships, and would willingly leave everything in the count's wise hands.

Count Rosen was deeply thoughtful. The wanton pillage of the Kataafa warriors and their barbarous killing and beheading of the native supporters of the chief justice's choice for king had greatly shocked him. He had failed to appreciate the natural cruelty of even the gentlest savages when their primi-

[1] Cry—Appeal.

tive passion for bloodshed is aroused. Now to accept this petition and hoist the flag could not be considered. If there had been no bloodshed, then his countrymen at home might have upheld him if he hoisted the flag and even formally annexed the islands. But he could offer as his excuse in accepting the office of governor the desire to bring about peace and allow the commerce of the islands to continue unchecked and in accordance with civilized law. But first he must feel his ground slowly. The other two Powers looked on with jealous eyes.

"I cannot be chief justice," he said after a long pause, "until Judge Lindsay has resigned that office. Send and ask him to continue in that position, and if he refuses, Kataafa has the right to appoint another."

A letter was quickly written and dispatched. Within a half hour a verbal answer was returned to the effect that Judge Lindsay did not recognize any king of Kapua save Panu, and that he, Lindsay, was yet the chief justice.

The count smiled sardonically.

"I shall accept the position of governor

and perform also the duties of chief justice," he said, "under the de facto government, but annexation we shall discuss later. First we must begin to repair all damage done, especially to the foreigners."

Kataafa and his chiefs withdrew. They smiled triumphantly. They believed all trouble had been lifted from their shoulders. This man, the count, had relieved them of all disagreeable consequences of their acts of violence. The men of war were undoubtedly afraid of him. So argued the chiefs of the rebel leader. Upon the announcement that the count was to be the adviser of Kataafa, the papalangi had carried their sailors back to their ships. Now, since the count was equal to the king or governor, maybe the war-ships would sail away "under the sea" and not return. The other war-ships that people said were coming would be afraid to let loose their thunder when they learned that this count and representative of a powerful papalangi king was at the head of the new government. With these quieting thoughts the stately chiefs filed out of the consulate and turned toward the king's residence at Kulinuu.

Count Rosen was not afraid of the consequences of his act. He gloried in the thought that his country was nearer a settlement of the Kapuan difficulty than she had ever been. Yet there were points in the proceedings which gave him considerable concern. The principal one was his knowledge that the American commander had discovered the source of the Kataafa guns and doubtless also suspected that the rebellion of the old warrior had been planned in order to create just the situation by which the Americans and English now found themselves confronted. If he only dared raise his country's standard over the islands! The count reasoned that Kapua would be taken by the country whom the natives chose to govern them. Now he had the opportunity of showing them what good government really meant, and if he could succeed in winning the native confidence, his country would be the choice of the people. In the last war the natives, when maltreated and coerced by the Kapuan firm and the Herzovinian war-ships, appealed to England for annexation. England would have liked to grant the request, but her rival's

friendship at that time was needed more than were the Kapuan Islands; so no notice was paid by the British Cabinet to the pitiful cry from the far-away South Sea monarchy.

"Klinger," the count said seriously, "you must take charge of the native laborers. Repair all damage possible to foreign property and guarantee to all just compensation. I shall grant full amnesty to all the supporters of Panu-Mafili. Be careful," he added severely. "Don't antagonize the foreigners. Don't grab too much, or we may lose all."

Within a week Ukula and the surrounding country was as peaceful as before the death of the old king Laupepe. New houses were going up on every hand, a sure sign of future peace in Kapua. By order of the count, who had taken charge of the government of the islands in fact as well as in fancy, guns could not be carried by the natives. The natives were encouraged to indulge in their Siva-Siva dances, at which the count made it his business to be present.

The English and American consuls maintained a haughty reserve when they transacted business with the governor, as the

natives called the count, but a semi-friendly relation was soon established between him and the naval officers.

The count provided himself a new house, built within a month, on the bungalow style, but of native workmanship, and invited all to a dance given in celebration of the opening.

The lawn in front of the house was on this occasion reserved for the Siva-Siva dancers.

The count received his guests in the lanai. The stately figure of Kataafa stood by his side and all visitors shook hands with him most cheerfully as they entered to greet the host.

Phil and Sydney accompanied Commander Tazewell. Alice and her sister came also, but Mr. Lee sent his regrets on account of indisposition. The mail had not arrived from home, and both the British consul and Mr. Lee considered it wiser in their official positions to refrain from an act which might savor of a recognition of the justice of the government. Judge Lindsay returned his invitation unopened.

The house was decorated profusely with bright bush flowers, and their perfume mingling with the odor of cocoanut oil with which

all Kapuans plentifully adorn their skins, gave the occasion a distinction which remained long in Phil's memory.

Herzovinian and Kapuan flags entwined were everywhere in evidence.

Everybody of any consequence, whatever their nationality, was there and the count moved at ease among them. He was, however, particularly attentive to the American commander.

The best Siva-Siva dancers had been collected, and as the house was entirely too small for the European dances, the guests were soon gathered on the lawn, where many chairs and benches had been placed. Two great bonfires had been built to furnish light in order to see the graceful movements of the dancers.

The count had escorted Commander Tazewell to the lawn. Phil and his friends fell in behind and found themselves in the front row where an excellent view was to be had when the dancers appeared.

"Those old women are the orchestra," Alice told them, pointing to a dozen or more figures huddled up on mats beyond the illumination of the bonfires.

Even as she spoke the count had raised his hand as a signal to begin.

Immediately the dim figures began to beat time with sticks upon their mats; while from the darkness a volume of savage melody burst forth. Then came slowly forward from the shadow into the illumination a score of men in single file, their arms on each other's shoulders. To Phil it resembled the prison-gang step, but every move of their half-naked bodies was graceful. The light reflected from their shiny skins gave a startling effect. On each head was a green wreath. Gummed to cheeks, ears and nose were hanging pendants of the leaves of the crimson hibiscus flower. About their necks were worn circles of boar tusks mixed with scarlet peppers and bright berries.

They entered, first slowly, singing a low and slow measure which increased as their movements quickened, until with a final rush they threw themselves into a squatting position on the ground facing the numerous audience.

Great was the applause when an equal number of women suddenly made their ap-

pearance from the opposite direction. Phil watched them fascinated. On they came with pride and consciousness of exalted position and importance. They were redolent and glistening with perfumed oil. Garlands of bright leaves and vivid flowers, wonderfully made, crowned their flowing locks. Like the men, necklaces from their beloved bush adorned their graceful necks. About their slender waists and hanging to the knee were fabulously valuable soft mats, their only garments. Garlands of green leaves encircled their knees and ankles. All this Phil knew vaguely before. His eager eyes clung to the leading dancer's face and did not leave it to define the marvelous costumes of those following. The girl was Avao, and leading the Siva-Siva given by Count Rosen and Kataafa. So surprised was he that he turned suddenly toward Alice, a question bursting on his lips.

"Wait," she breathed.

Avao, the Tapau of Ukula, daughter of Tuamana, the irreconcilable loyalist, was dancing before his enemies, while he was still a self-imposed exile on board the Ameri-

can war-ship. What did it mean? Could it be that even Tuamana had been won by this remarkable foreign nobleman?

At length the dancers were in place, in two rows, the women in front, and all seated cross-legged. The Tapau with her marvelous head-dress of human hair and mother of pearl, glistening in the firelight, sat smiling proudly in the middle of her troupe. The orchestra, now reinforced by many good voices, was keeping time. The dancers were motionless as if struck from gleaming marble and then Avao raised her arms, flinging them out with graceful ease, and as if the twoscore men and women had been molded into a single figure, every arm was flung out in perfect unison with their girlish leader. It was a drill of the most difficult kind, requiring years of daily practice. No single person seemed to lag or get out of time, while all the while a weird chant rose and fell and finally as the movements, at first slow and deliberate, took on a galloping pace, the high treble of the women and the harsh bass of the men mounted to a pitch of delirious and savage ecstasy and then suddenly stopped.

A thunder of applause greeted the marvelous performance. Phil for the first time withdrew his eyes from the savage beauty of the scene and saw that hundreds of sailors of all three nations had been admitted to the show. He recognized the uniform of the American sailors and smiled with pleasure at their warm reception to the efforts of Avao, to whom was due the credit for the perfect dancing of the youth and maids of Ukula.

Figure after figure was performed. The enthusiasm of the natives rose higher as the evening wore on.

Suddenly the band began to play the Kapuan national air, and all rose to their feet. After it had finished all eyes were again turned to the dancers.

Slowly, gracefully they swayed their supple bodies and arms. The orchestra was silent except for the staccato time made by the sticks striking the dry mats. The dancing and singing seemed to be done subconsciously. No effort seemed to be used, yet all followed in movement, in tune and in word, the leading Tapau, each performer linking his own consciousness with the mind of

the maiden as if swayed by her will. What she did and said was done and said without appreciable interval by each of the dancers. Such was the marvelous degree of the training.

"This is the last," Phil heard the count say. "It is a song in honor of the king."

Alice heard and smiled. Phil saw her lips tremble and her color pale in the firelight.

"Panu-Mafili o le Tupu-o-Kapua—ah!"

A solemn hush came over the assemblage. The song gained volume, faster and faster. Then a roar shook the air and the great concourse of native spectators had risen to their feet.

The performers appeared not to appreciate the meaning of the crowd. Phil had risen suddenly from his chair—ready, but for what he did not know. The song had conveyed nothing to his mind. He had not understood the words, so swiftly were they sung. A glance at the count told that he, too, was in the dark. Phil was conscious of Alice's trembling hand on his arm and heard her whisper, "They are praising Panu-Mafili as king instead of Kataafa. Avao is getting her revenge

for being asked to lead. You know a Tapau cannot refuse to dance if asked by a chief."

With a final graceful sway the dancers jumped to their feet, their hands held aloft in sign of finality. The audience had now completely drowned the voices of the singers. Phil saw several chiefs rush toward the dancers. The crowd was in an uproar. The dancers gave way before the threat of those who had advanced, menacing them with bodily injury. Avao stood almost alone, a smile of defiance upon her handsome face.

"Is she in danger?" Phil asked excitedly of Alice at his side. "Would they dare injure her?" Before Alice could answer Phil perceived the distorted countenance of Klinger. He had risen from his seat at some distance from the count. Phil saw him talking and gesticulating with a group of natives, pushing them forward, as if directing them to commit some act which they were reluctant to do.

Avao, with unconcern in her face, appeared not to hear the torrent of abuse heaped upon her from all sides. Several women darted toward her and endeavored to tear her costume to pieces. She evaded these angry

rushes, but Phil saw that the temper of the crowd would not be appeased until revenge upon this daring girl had been taken.

"Look," Alice cried out joyfully; "the sailors are coming to her rescue." Phil saw a mass of white suddenly encircle the cringing dancers and then face outward toward the crowd. He recognized O'Neil as their leader, and wondered what would happen next.

Klinger was talking excitedly to the count. The latter had ceased to smile. A dark frown was in his face. Then Phil noticed him raise his hand to quell the disturbance. A loud voice of a chief at his side warned all to silence. Slowly the babel died away.

CHAPTER XV

THE "DE FACTO" GOVERNMENT

"BRING the girl to me," the count commanded.

The angry natives made way for the proud Tapau as she advanced toward the governor. Phil read in their savage glances that this brave girl, if she were left to their mercy, was in great danger.

In front of the count and Commander Tazewell, Avao stopped. Her eyes were cast down, but she held her head high; then making a low bow she bent her knee in sign of submission.

"Will you not sing for King Kataafa?" the count asked kindly. Phil listened eagerly for her answer. The tumult about them was hushed.

"Alii," Avao answered, "I have sung for the king of Kapua. Panu-Mafili has been declared our king by the chief justice."

Count Rosen's face paled, and he bit his

lips to suppress his great annoyance and mortification. Klinger's rough voice behind him was distinctly audible.

"Throw her out. We can get another Tapau leader."

"Will you not sing Kataafa's praise?" the count asked, not heeding Klinger's interruption.

Avao gave her answer readily and distinctly.

"I will lead the song for Kataafa as a great chief, loved and honored by his people."

"Don't bother with the cantankerous girl," Klinger recommended brutally.

Commander Tazewell recognized the awkwardness of the situation. His admiration was for the girl who had drawn down upon her head the anger of most of her own race. Her loyalty to her father, Tuamana, and the rightful king could not be shaken. He turned to the count, a smile on his face.

"We are all greatly indebted," he said, "for this delightful evening. I thank you for myself, officers and men." Then after wringing the count's hand, he turned gallantly to the silent Tapau.

"Will you take my arm?" he said.

To the surprise of everybody and the chagrin of the governor and Klinger, Avao passed her arm through the American commander's and together they marched determinedly toward the gate. Phil, Sydney, and Alice fell in behind, while the sailors, seeing that the other dancers were not to be menaced by the crowd, the entire blame being placed on the shoulders of their leader, the Tapau, quietly dispersed, and withdrew from the grounds.

Having gained the road, Commander Tazewell relinquished his charge into Alice's keeping.

"You must come home with me," the young girl declared. "Oh, Avao! I could hug you, if it weren't for all that smelly oil you have rubbed on yourself."

The midshipmen joined in praise of the heroine.

"Avao," Commander Tazewell said as he was about to leave the party at the dock to return to the ship, "your courage to-night was of a higher order than mere men display. You have taught your own people and even

others a lesson in loyalty and honor. They did not see it then, but some of them will after they have had time to think over your simple words.

"What you said to the count," he added as he shook her hand, "was told to Kataafa by a chief at my side in his native tongue. The great chief's face showed no anger. I thought I read admiration and maybe a consciousness of guilt. Kataafa, I fear, has been badly advised by his trusted white friends."

Avao was too greatly touched to express her gratitude in English. A flood of her own poetic tongue, only partly understood by the American captain, was her answer.

The midshipmen left the two young girls at the consulate and returned toward the landing.

"It was the count's own fault," Phil declared. "He sent word to Avao that she must lead, and by the Kapuan custom, a Tapau cannot refuse."

"Well," Sydney replied, "as O'Neil would say, 'he got his!'"

The easy-going life of the natives in Kapua now seemed to have again returned. Under

the new government many improvements were made. The streets of Ukula were cleaned, and a campaign was made by the new government upon the native neglect in leaving their fruit to decay in the open, thus increasing the great pest of flies. The trade of the Kapuan firm flourished. The foreign traders, English and American, complained to their consuls bitterly. No one would buy from them. When they asked their farmer customers the reason, they received the smiling answer, "We shall soon belong to Herzovinia, so we wish to see how we like to buy our supplies from them."

Several weeks thus went by without important disagreements between the "de facto" government and the foreign consuls. Kataafa remained quietly in Kulinuu. His army was not, however, disbanded. Their guns for the time being were hidden from view, but the warriors who had assembled from all parts of the islands in answer to the call of their choice for king did not return to their homes. All the natives who had been loyal to Panu, except the rightful king and his high chief Tuamana, were again living their usual

lives ashore. The latter two refused to acknowledge Kataafa, and remained on board the "Sitka." The two rival factions lived side by side, apparently without discord. The women engaged in many heated altercations, and frequently spread disquieting alarms of impending strife between the two political parties, but nothing ever came of these prophecies except now and then a personal encounter between natives of diverging views, which was settled without recourse to anything more hurtful than fists and clubs.

One day the whole town of Ukula was ringing with the news of a murder. A black boy, a Solomon Islander, on the Kapuan firm's plantation at Vaileli had been deliberately shot and killed by a Kataafa warrior. The latter after committing the crime strolled proudly into the town, boasting that he had shot a "black pig."

Phil and Sydney were in the consulate when Avao brought this sensational news.

Killing during a war was looked upon by the foreigners as in the order of things, but during peace times such crimes could not be tolerated.

"Give a child a gun," Phil exclaimed, "and there's no telling what will happen."

Alice drew all the gruesome particulars from her native girl friend, and retailed them to the midshipmen.

"He did it just to see how his gun would shoot," she told them. "And when he found the bullet wouldn't kill the black boy at the first shot he walked up close and shot him twice more, then severed his head from his body and brought it to town to show the wonderful power of the rifle."

"What will they do about it?" Sydney asked.

Alice shook her head.

"The murdered black belongs to the Kapuan firm," she replied. "He was worth about a thousand dollars. Under the Kapuan law there is no penalty for murder, but under the laws of the treaty the penalty is death."

Every one was greatly surprised when they heard that the murderer had been arrested by Johnny Upolu, on a warrant issued by the count himself, and he would be tried by the native court of Ukula.

The midshipmen and Alice did not miss the

trial. It was simple, and after the episode was told, the accused refused to make any defense.

For three days the judges deliberated over their verdict.

"It's a wonder to me," Mr. Lee said, on his porch after the trial was over and before the verdict had been given, "that there haven't been more of these terrible affairs. Nearly five thousand natives now have guns hidden in their homes and there's no telling when the lust to kill will come to some of them. As I watched this murderer's face during his trial, I could see no signs of penitence. He seemed to be proud of his exploit. If they would hang this fiery young warrior publicly it would make me think more kindly of the count and his government."

The midshipmen readily agreed to the sentiment.

"But," Phil objected, "the count is trying to gain popularity with all the natives, and if they hang this man for only killing a black slave, the natives will consider they have been treated unjustly. I doubt whether the man will be punished."

"If he is not," Mr. Lee exclaimed, "it will

be a blot upon our civilization, and I, as American consul, will strongly condemn the morals of this unrighteous government that permits a murderer to move among us unpunished; in fact, worshiped by the others as a hero."

Mary Hamilton paid the consul and his family a long visit. Her husband was one of the five judges who were still considering what to do and she was eager to learn what the American "Alii" thought, in order that she could go back and give good advice to her lord and master.

"It is very difficult," she said in remarkably good English; "if they find the man guilty and order his death all our people will cry out upon the judges for hanging a brave warrior who has done nothing wrong fa'a Kapua. To kill a 'black' man is all the same as shooting a pig. And," she added, "if they say what they would like to say and set the man free, the count and Missi Klinger will be very angry, and after we belong to their country will punish the judges severely."

Mr. Lee laughed, despite the seriousness in Mary's voice.

"It's their duty, Mary," he replied, "to find according to the facts. If this man killed another deliberately and without provocation they should condemn him to be hung. If the man were a white man and I were the judge that is what I should be bound to do."

Mary looked puzzled.

"But, Alii," she replied, "this man is a very good man. He is a fine fighter, and a leader among the men of his family. This black boy was no good. Is it right that a good man be killed just because a bad black boy is killed?"

"A life for a life, Mary," Mr. Lee replied firmly. "That is the white man's law."

The next day the judges gave their decision. It was that the native was guilty of murder and must be hung.

The midshipmen were passing the jail a few days after the sentence had been given. They saw the prisoner squatting quietly within the doorway of the prison, talking unconcernedly with his policeman guard.

"I feel sorry for that poor chap," Sydney said sadly. "He's a victim of white inter-

ference. Why should we force our laws upon these savages? According to his method of thinking, he has done no more than step on a cockroach, and he can't see why we make so much fuss about it. Anyway, he doesn't seem to be worrying—nature has omitted nerves in his make-up."

Phil had drawn near and now spoke a few words to the condemned man, who smiled affably and pointed gleefully into the next room, where several natives were going through some mysterious looking pantomime.

"Go ahead; don't mind us, Johnny," Phil exclaimed as the chief of police and his assistants stopped their performance and glanced sheepishly at the midshipmen.

"By George!" Sydney exclaimed in horror. "A rehearsal before the principal."

One policeman was carefullly greasing a wicked looking rope with a knot and noose at one end. Three others were practicing pinioning and "turning off"[1] the culprit. One, to make the scene realistic to their admiring audience, was chained and placed in the corner of the room. The other two then

[1] Turning off—Springing the trap.

would approach with straps in their hands, knock off the shackles from the supposed condemned man and quickly pinion him. Then the three would march slowly to the middle of the room. They adjusted an imaginary noose, drew on a real black cap over the make-believe prisoner's head, adjusted the straps and then at a sharp word of command, all but the make-believe condemned man stepped smartly aside, and then one went through the motion of springing the trap upon which the blindfolded policeman was supposed to stand. Johnny Upolu told the midshipmen proudly that they had practiced it over a hundred times already, and hoped that it would be a sight worth seeing, and advised them not on any account to miss the real hanging.

The prisoner understood sufficient English to understand and smiled, adding his wish that they should not miss the show.

"How's that for nerve?" Phil exclaimed. "Sitting there watching himself hung and actually smiling over it. I'm certainly not going to miss the real thing. I wonder if his splendid nerve will break down at the last?"

The day of execution was set at a week

hence. The "de facto" government, as the British and American consuls insisted upon calling it, apparently had decided that in the interest of civilization the dread sentence of the law should be carried out with due decorousness.

Stump, who was by trade a carpenter and who had in some unaccountable way been experienced in erecting gallows, was seen directing the erection of a novel sort of framework on the public "Malae"[1] at Kulinuu.

"Who gave you the job?" O'Neil asked Stump, after he and Marley had watched the work for several minutes.

Stump did not answer; instead he drew near the boatswain's mate and whispered anxiously:

"'Bully' Scott hasn't left the islands yet. He and the 'Talofa' are around at Saluafata harbor, the other end of the island. He sent me word by a native to come back, or he'd come and get me."

"You don't believe he will, do you?" O'Neil asked.

"There ain't many things he won't do

[1] Malae—Square.

when he sets his mind to it," Stump replied nervously. "Klinger offered me this job," he added. "I've done some smart carpentering in my time. I've got to earn enough money to pay my way back to 'Frisco.'"

O'Neil's sympathy was aroused at once.

"You're an American," he said. "Why don't you ship in the navy? We need a carpenter."

Stump shook his head.

"No more going to sea for Ben Stump. I'm going home and look up my folks."

"When's this show coming off?" O'Neil asked, changing the subject; he saw Stump wasn't keen to go in the navy again.

"Between you and me, Mr. O'Neil," Stump confided, "I don't believe this here gallows will ever grow any fruit." Stump was about to say more, but perceiving Klinger riding his pony toward them, he shuffled awkwardly away, and began again to direct his native workmen.

"Did he mean they ain't going to hang this murderer?" Marley asked of his friend.

O'Neil nodded. "I think he did," he replied, "and I guess he's about right."

The day before the execution a rumor passed through the native population that the man who had killed the black boy would not be hung, after all.

Alice brought the gossip to the consulate.

"They would hardly dare a rescue," Mr. Lee declared.

"O'Neil said he had heard from Stump, the man who built the gallows, that it wouldn't be used," Phil informed them.

"Just playing to the gallery, I reckon," Commander Tazewell suggested.

"If I were only sure the poor fellow won't be hung," Alice said earnestly, "I'd go and see the ceremony."

"It's no place for women," Mr. Lee said reprovingly. "On the contrary, if I thought the 'de facto' government was honest in its desire to promote the Kapuan morals instead of making a fiasco out of it, I'd go and occupy a front row seat."

The next day when Phil and Sydney with many other curious white men, both from shore and the war-ships, reached the Malae, they found gathered a great throng of natives of both sexes.

"I guess Stump, O'Neil and all the rest of them were wrong," Phil said, after they had taken their seats and noted that the hour set had nearly arrived. Below the gallows the prisoner sat in a chair, just as unconcerned as he had been when he watched the pantomime rehearsal of his own death. Mr. Carlson, in full consular uniform, was the only official present. The king, with the count seated on his right hand, was a few yards in front of the gallows. A company of native soldiers under arms was drawn up near the high structure. Klinger was standing off by himself apparently only an interested spectator.

Phil saw Stump behind the prisoner; apparently, he was to advise the native hangman, and make sure that there would be no painful error in the proceedings.

"It's a life for a life," Sydney exclaimed turning almost sick, as he saw the prisoner jerked to his feet by Johnny Upolu and his two drilled assistants. The irons were quickly struck off and the man's arms pinioned in a manner that reflected great credit upon Johnny. A native band suddenly

struck up a doleful march, and the death party, keeping perfect time, moved off to the very foot of the ladder of the gallows.

"I'm sorry I came," Phil said nervously. "I don't want to see the poor fellow put to death."

"Look!" Sydney exclaimed. The Herzovinian consul had risen and was walking toward the king. The music suddenly stopped. The prisoner, held on each side by a policeman, was stopped, one foot already upon the ladder to the platform.

The midshipmen gazed in wonder at the sudden interruption. They saw the consul present a paper to the king, who quietly read it, then bowed his affirmative answer.

"A reprieve," Phil exclaimed. "I'm glad of it, and I'll never go to another hanging." Both suddenly laughed nervously. They were glad in their young hearts that the murderer was not to expiate his crime on the gallows.

A talking man rose to tell the people. The midshipmen could not understand a word, but the effect upon the crowd showed the news was to their liking. Suddenly several

voices were raised in song; slowly the volume increased until every native had joined in. It was a song of praise for Herzovinia.

"A play for popularity," Sydney said disgustedly as they moved away toward the road and back to the landing. "And another step toward annexation."

CHAPTER XVI

CARL KLINGER

Avao appeared at the consulate one morning a few days after the count's Siva-Siva dance, her black eyes bright with indignation.

"See," she exclaimed as she handed to Alice a sheet of paper on which was printed a dozen or more lines.

Alice read slowly, the color mounting to her cheeks and her breath coming faster.

"They have confiscated all of Tuamana's land," she exclaimed, "and branded him a rebel to the king. This is the official notice posted about the town."

Phil, in spite of the evident seriousness of this act to the native girl, could not suppress a smile.

"Kind of mixed up affair, isn't it?" he said quietly. "Rebel Kataafa brands the loyal Tuamana a rebel."

"This is Klinger's work," Alice declared.

"The land is most valuable, cocoanut and banana groves, and worth a dollar a tree every year for the copra alone. There must be over a thousand trees on the land. It's a fortune, and it is all that Tuamana's family possesses."

"Can nothing be done?" Sydney asked solicitously. "Where is it located?"

"Let's go and look it over," Phil suggested, "if it isn't far away."

The horses were quickly saddled and the four were soon on the way to visit the family estate of Tuamana, chief of Ukula.

It was near the sea beach, to the eastward of Matautu. As they approached the cocoanut grove they beheld a number of black boys[1] running barbed wire through new fence pales, recently set up.

"They are fencing it off already," Alice exclaimed as they halted their ponies.

Avao pushed her pony across the wire that had not as yet been stretched, calling to the others to follow. Very soon they arrived in front of a very large native house. Several women sitting within quickly arose and greeted them.

[1] Solomon Islanders are black; Kapuans are brown.

Avao talked with them for several minutes.

"My relatives say that Missi Klinger has ordered them to move their house; that it is on the Kapuan firm's property," Avao said, her voice breaking in mortified anger.

They had all dismounted and several of the native men had climbed trees to gather fresh cocoanuts for their visitors.

Suddenly a cry of alarm was raised, and one of the young natives slid quickly down the tree and dodged off into the bush. Phil and his friends had just reached the house when they heard a hoarse cry of anger, followed by a loud report as of a pistol discharge. Phil hurriedly moved until he could see between trees that the other native was standing at the foot of the tree into which he had climbed, and that Klinger was beating him with his slave whip. The native was silent, stoically accepting the punishment from the white man, while yet in his hands were several green cocoanuts he had just gathered.

"Who is the native boy?" Phil asked of Avao. He saw her lips were trembling.

"My cousin," she said.

Phil, acting upon a strong impulse to protect the native, who had been acting in his own service, turned and rapidly approached the brutal scene.

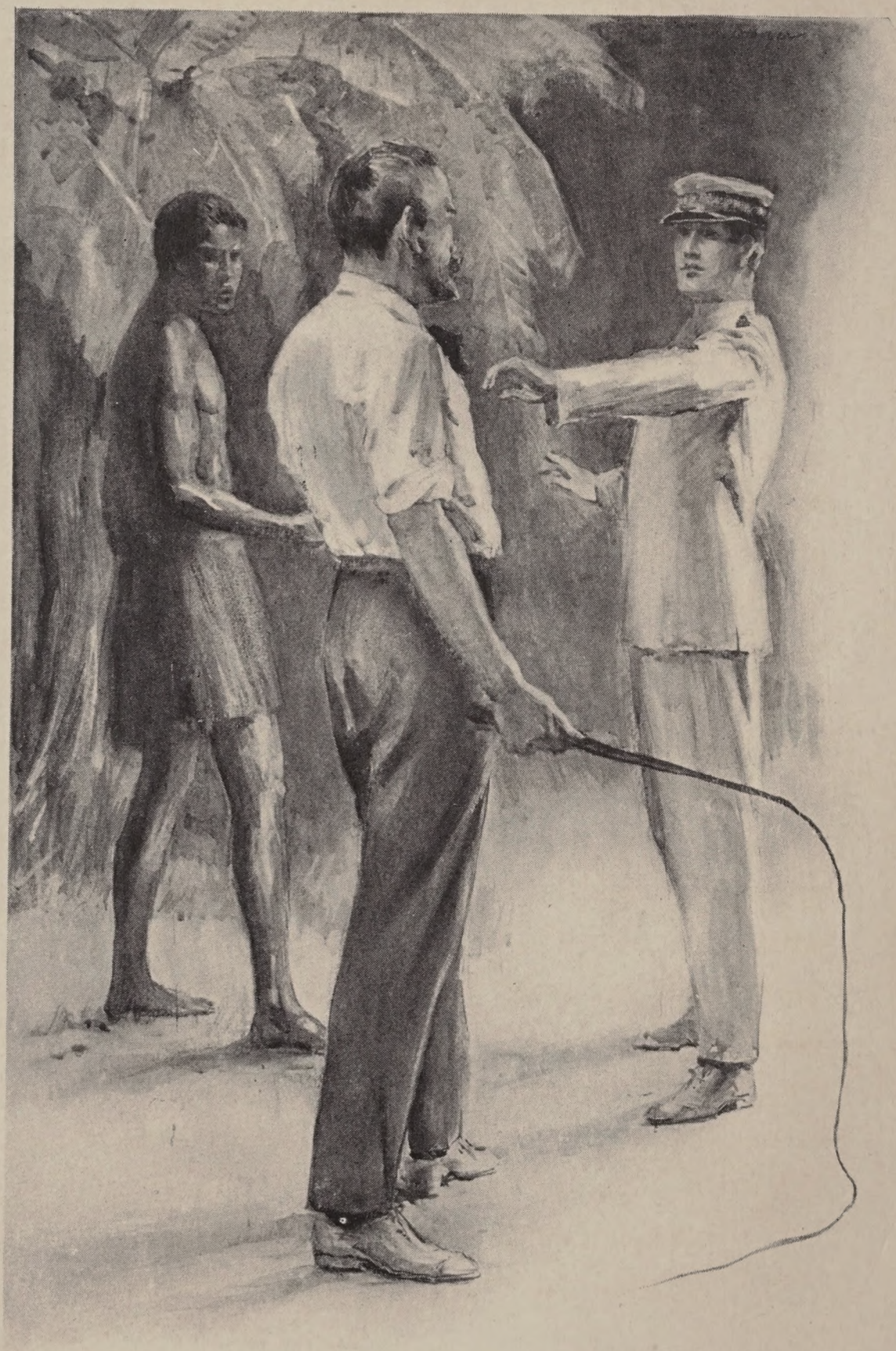
"Mr. Klinger," he exclaimed tensely, "you will please stop whipping that native at once. It's outrageous. What has he done to deserve such punishment?"

With his whip hovering over the bruised back of the native, Klinger gazed angrily at the intruder.

"This is my method of punishing these rebels who steal my fruit," he replied, and then the cruel whip again fell upon the native's quivering back.

"Stop it, I say!" Phil cried determinedly. "I shan't stand idly by and see you maltreat that poor fellow. He was gathering his own fruit for us to eat. You are the one who is stealing other people's fruit, and what's more," and Phil's voice rose high in indignation, "if you don't get off of this place and take your slaves with you, I'll whip you with your own rawhide."

Klinger's hand dropped to his side in sheer dumfounded amazement. He gazed in



"YOU ARE SIMPLY A BULLY"

bewilderment at this young man, not able to realize that such words had been addressed to him.

Phil made a sign for the native to go, and the stolid but mystified native smiled in his pain and moved out of reach of the whip.

"Now go," Phil commanded to Klinger. "This place is private property, and you are trespassing." He pointed the way out.

Klinger slowly recovered his balance. Then a sinister smile spread slowly over his face.

"I can show you that you and your friends are the trespassers," he said evenly. "Here is my title to the property, signed and executed by the court." He drew forth a paper from his coat pocket.

Phil gazed squarely into Klinger's face unwaveringly. "You heard what I said," the young midshipman replied. "I saw the way you horsewhipped that inoffensive native; if I were he I would wait my chance and give you back two blows for every one received. You are a brutal coward! Your kind don't fight. You are simply a bully!"

Klinger, fairly aroused, was now stung

to action; again he raised his cruel whip, slinging the long lash behind him and retreating a step to give the blow fair play. Phil did not budge. He saw the long leash raise itself as if alive from the ground; he heard it sing in the air above him, expecting it to wrap itself stinging and biting about his neck. But it passed harmlessly a few inches from his shoulder and fell upon the ground at his feet with a dull report. Then he could hardly believe his eyes, for his antagonist was rolling on the ground, a naked brown body clinging desperately to him.

Phil was transfixed in astonishment. His first intention, to go to the aid of the native, he saw was unnecessary. The supple native boy had found his strength and was slowly choking the breath from the manager's body. Klinger's face had turned purple before Phil could persuade the injured native to desist. The boy was fairly delirious with savage joy over his wonderful achievement. Klinger lay insensible upon the ground. Phil stooped, the manager's whip in his own hands, and tore the man's shirt at the neck and felt for his heart. He feared that

some permanent injury might have been done him.

Sydney and the others were now at Phil's side. Avao openly praised the native boy for his prowess, and Phil learned that a command from her had sent this young bundle of steel muscles to protect him from the manager's cruel whip. The native grinned for joy. He had discovered his own manhood and protected a papalangi friend of the queen of his clan from a ruffianly slave driver.

"He's nearly choked to death," Phil announced as he rose to his feet. "That boy has the strength of a young gorilla in his hands. Look at those marks on Klinger's neck."

The manager's neck was a sorry sight; the cords and muscles had been twisted and almost pulled bodily from the broad throat.

"He'll have an awfully sore throat when he wakes up," Sydney said quietly.

"We must get him to a doctor at once," Phil exclaimed. "Avao, call to those slave boys. We must have him carried to town."

The Tapau called, and several of the blacks started toward them.

Then Phil thought of the native boy who had come to his aid. He feared for him. He knew that some cruel and unheard-of punishment would be given to the native that dared to so roughly handle the manager of the Kapuan firm. Death even was not impossible, especially as the native was a relative of Tuamana.

"Avao," he whispered, "tell the boy to go away far and not come back until you send him word."

"He knows, Alii," Avao replied. The boy pressed his forehead hurriedly to the girl's hand, and then murmuring, "Tofa, Alii,"[1] with a cheerful grin vanished into the "bush," just as the first of the Solomon Islanders arrived to raise their fallen master.

With Klinger carried on the shoulders of several black boys, and with the Americans bringing up the rear, the party proceeded toward the town.

Fortunately a carriage was hitched at the British consulate and the driver sitting in the shade near by. They put Klinger inside, while Phil and Sydney remained to sup-

[1] Tofa, Alii—Good-bye, chief.

port him, and thus they drove hurriedly to Klinger's residence back of the store.

"This isn't going to improve the kind feeling between us and the 'de facto' government," Phil said.

"I'm glad you are not responsible," Sydney declared.

"But I was," Phil insisted. "I goaded him on to strike me. I had an irresistible desire to take his whip and give him a plentiful taste of his own medicine. He would have struck me, too. I saw it in his eyes. He has an ungovernable temper, and was clean off his head."

"Why will you be so rash?" Sydney asked affectionately. "Some day you're going to get into serious trouble."

"I can't help it, Syd," Phil answered soberly. "Such acts as that, beating an inoffensive native, make my blood boil, and I'm thankful I have the courage and strength to interfere. You would have done it too, Syd," he exclaimed, "if you had seen it before I did."

Sydney shook his head. "No," he replied. "My blood is more sluggish than yours. You did exactly right though, Phil."

Phil was silent for a moment. Klinger's face was now regaining its color, but his body was still limp and his eyes closed.

"Syd," Phil said quietly, "you are really more solid than I. You reflect before you act. I too frequently act upon impulse without reflection."

"You act, though, only upon good impulses," Sydney replied.

The carriage stopped in front of the Kapuan firm's store, and a couple of bystanders were impressed to carry the injured man inside.

"Go tell the 'fomai,'" Phil instructed a native woman, and she departed quickly to obey.

"Shall we wait?" Phil asked nervously. This part of the ordeal was trying for the midshipman.

"I guess we must," Sydney replied. "We shall have to explain how it happened."

Phil frowned. "I'm not going to reveal the identity of that native boy. Maybe Klinger did not recognize him."

The manager had been carried into his own room, while Fanua, his native wife, hovered over him anxiously. She gazed in open distrust upon the two officers.

"Here comes the little doctor," Sydney exclaimed in relief, as the same fat, middle-aged man that had before restored the injured Klinger after his earlier encounter with Phil pushed his way through the crowd of inquisitive natives, and entered the room.

Klinger had opened his eyes. The pain in his throat made him cry out weakly.

The doctor examined the injured man's neck in silence.

"A black boy run 'amuck'[1]?" he asked after he had finished the examination. "It looks as if a whole gang had risen against him."

Klinger tried to speak, but his voice failed.

"We'll leave now," Phil returned. His nerves were under tension. He felt no sympathy for Klinger, yet wished to avoid a disagreeable scene with the injured man. "I shall be ready to give my story whenever it is asked for. Good-day, sir."

Sydney followed Phil from the room.

"It's a relief to get away," Phil declared.

They went at once to the ship and told their story to Commander Tazewell.

[1] Amuck—A form of insanity where the person affected desires to kill.

"That isn't the only land grabbing the Kapuan firm has been indulging in," he informed them. "Our lease of land at Tua-Tua in Kulila has been declared illegal by Kataafa and affirmed by the acting chief justice, Count Rosen. The Kapuan firm, I hear, brought in evidence of a prior claim of purchase. Of course it's a trick, but we can't prove that before an interested judge."

The midshipmen drew in their breath in surprise. Evidently the land grabbing was not confined to property owned by uninfluential natives.

"I have searched all morning," the commander exclaimed annoyedly, "for the lease signed by Moanga, the chief of Tua-Tua, who owns the property. I took it from the safe yesterday and thought I had returned it there, but it is not in the regular envelope. Probably it is only mislaid, and I shall find it among my other papers. I'm afraid I'm getting careless. A natural effect of this torrid climate."

"Are you going to dispute the claim?" Phil asked.

"That was my intention," Commander

Tazewell replied, "but the lease is a private one between Chief Moanga and myself. It must be confirmed at home before money is appropriated. Of course I acted under instructions from the Navy Department. It's embarrassing not to find the paper, because I cannot register an appeal very well without it."

"Do you believe it has been stolen?" Phil asked earnestly. His thoughts had gone to the orderly Schultz.

"That isn't likely," the commander said, shaking his head. "No one has access to my cabin while I'm not here except a few trusted men who keep it clean, and my orderlies, and all of them are men with excellent records. No," he added certainly. "It'll turn up; it's probably in a wrong envelope, and I'll find it after more search.

"So Klinger has again come to grief through you," he said to Phil suppressing a smile of gratification. "I am glad you did not carry out the threat you made. I wouldn't care to have my officers engage in fights with civilians. It doesn't look well outside, even though it may have been justified."

Phil acknowledged the mild rebuke.

"I know I'm too hasty," he said humbly.

The next day news came from ashore that all the male relatives of Tuamana had been arrested for the assault on Klinger and thrown into jail. The house the midshipmen had visited the day before had been demolished by order of Klinger, and the women turned off the place.

Alice was keyed to a high pitch of excitement when the lads saw her in the afternoon.

"They tried to arrest Avao, too," she exclaimed, "but she ran away and managed to reach the consulate, where they dared not touch her. All the land belonging to Panu's family in Matafeli has been claimed by Klinger for his firm," she told them almost in a breath. "Where will it all stop?"

"It won't stop," Phil replied savagely, "until the present outfit are put out and the legal government is put in. The treaty is being violated right and left. I can't see what this man Count Rosen expects to gain by it. The three great Powers when they hear what is going on down here must decide that the high-handedness of Rosen and

Klinger have only made things more difficult to adjust."

"Maybe that's where the count expects to gain," Alice said seriously. "Maybe their country wishes to make difficulties—to show the other nations that three countries cannot together run one little group of islands without war and bloodshed."

"I, for the life of me," Sydney declared, "cannot see why the United States and England don't pull up stakes and leave the islands to Herzovinia. I know we have our eyes on the fine harbor of Tua-Tua, but I can't see when we are going to use it."

"Maybe you can't see!" Phil replied sarcastically, "and one reason you can't see is that you haven't given it a minute's thought. Herzovinia has a body of intelligent men in her government whose duty it is to study such questions. It is quite evident those men have advised their nation to endeavor to acquire Kapua, and this is her way of trying to acquire it. The captain of the British war-ship told us the other day that he had seen their machinery of annexation work over in Africa.

"First comes the merchant, pushing his way in by brute strength and awkwardness, shoving out all other merchants by staying close to his job. Then a row between the merchants and the natives, followed closely by the arrival of a war-ship. Then a punitive expedition against the natives who have dared to resent the oppression of the merchants. Then diplomatic correspondence assuring other nations there is no thought of acquisition of territory and then all of a sudden up goes the Herzovinian flag, and the thing has been accomplished. As I said before," Phil ended his impromptu speech, "I can't see why the count hesitates about hoisting his flag. We can't stop him. We haven't men enough."

CHAPTER XVII

BEN STUMP LISTENS

CARL KLINGER paced the porch of the count's home in visible annoyance. Count Rosen surveyed the angry overseer complacently from his easy chair under the shade of the thatched roof porch.

"Don't be an idiot, Klinger," he said. "You can't afford to indulge in personal vengeance. The American officer has gotten ahead of you and put you to shame before the natives, and I think you deserved it. Your work was childish. Putting that cartoon on your wall was bad enough, but to attempt to thrash a native relative of Tuamana under the eyes of his own friends and supporters was infantile. If you don't stop swearing vengeance upon that young midshipman I'll be forced to lock you up in your own house and put a guard over you. To attempt such barefaced outlawry as an attack upon the person of an American naval officer by

hired thugs would only lead to intervention by the war-ships."

Klinger sulked in silence, and the count continued :

"The last mail steamer carried Kataafa's appeal for annexation. It was to be cabled from San Francisco to our government. An answer should reach here now in a few days. The news of the war of course is now known everywhere, but I am sure our own war-ship with instructions for us will arrive first. The United States may beat us, but upon the appearance of a Yankee ship I'm going to hoist the flag. Even sooner if I hear from our man on the Yankee ship anything alarming."

"Why do you take such chances?" Klinger asked surlily. "We're in power. The English and Americans are afraid to act without orders from home. Hoist the flag and be done with it!"

"Klinger," the count replied haughtily, "as long as you keep within your limitations as a manager of a commercial firm, grabbing land from defenseless natives and using it to increase the income of your company, then I

am willing to listen to your advice, but when you make bold to advise me upon matters of state, you make yourself ridiculous. This savage kingdom is isolated from the great world," he continued in a more kindly tone of explanation as he saw the look of apology in the rough overseer's face. "The nearest cable stations are San Francisco and Auckland; news of what has happened reached our capital before or as soon as it was received in Washington or London. A Herzovinian war-ship has been waiting in Auckland to bring us instructions. I do not know the present diplomatic situation. If I hoist the flag before the arrival of the war-ship, I may find the instructions are not to hoist the flag. We may be on the verge of a war with our commercial rival England over some other diplomatic difficulty, and our action here might greatly embarrass our foreign office."

"But you said," Klinger persisted, "you would hoist the flag upon the appearance of a Yankee war-ship."

"The arrival of another Yankee war-ship must mean but one thing," the count replied patiently, "and that would be that the United

States government had decided to back the decision of the chief justice and put Panu-Mafili on the throne by force. In that case I would have to resign. Kataafa would either have to submit or else fight the white sailors. If the new arrival sees our flag flying and our sailors in possession, then the Americans and British must stop and think a long time before they use force to drive us out of the government."

"And then after that if your instructions coming on our war-ship should be not to hoist the flag?" Klinger asked. "What then?"

"Then I shall send a war-ship to Auckland post-haste to tell what I have done, and to wait for an answer, and then hasten back here." The count smiled proudly as his plan unfolded itself. "Our government could then wait to see how the news was received. If they saw it was embarrassing they could order the flag hauled down. If not, then it would remain flying permanently."

"I have that lease of land at Tua-Tua made by Chief Moanga to the American captain," Klinger said jubilantly, showing the document, "and Scott has gone across to get

Moanga's signature to one I drew up for the 'firm,' and to destroy the other duplicate."

The count nodded. "Tua-Tua we should keep, but the United States government may succeed in getting the island of Kulila after all. She has had her eyes on it for many years, and doubtless thinks her claim is first. We would not fight her for it, so unless we can win out through diplomacy it will be hers."

"Little good it will do her," Klinger said savagely, "when the Kapuan firm owns the only water-front that is not full of quicksand."

The count chuckled. "We statesmen can always receive a lesson from a clever merchant. No doubt the United States will be forced to pay a fancy price for your land when she makes up her mind to build a naval station there. By the way," he added, "I thought Scott was intent upon saving his skin, and had sailed for the Fijis."

"That was his intention," Klinger replied, "but he ran into Fangaloa Bay for water, and heard you owned the government; so he sent me word he was staying around to get a cargo of copra, and incidentally to coax back his mate Stump."

"And you sent him to Tua-Tua on a mission to Chief Moanga?" the count asked pointedly. "What does he receive for that service?"

"Stump," Klinger replied. "He also got a cargo of copra to be landed in Suva."

The count shook his head doubtfully. "That's a serious business, to seize an American and 'shanghai' him," he said.

"It will be done without force," Klinger explained. "Stump is in our employ. He's trying to pay his way back to America. I'll have him in Fangaloa on some plantation work, and let Scott do his own shanghaiing. Scott should be back at Fangaloa to-day unless he had trouble persuading Moanga."

The portly figure of Mr. Carlson emerged from the palm and banana grove in front of the bungalow. A few seconds later he arrived on the porch, puffing and blowing from his exertions. As the count and the overseer turned to greet him, none too graciously, the figure of a man unrolled itself from the tapa draperies of a window opening on to the porch, and silently withdrew through the kitchen in the rear.

Stump, for it was he, held in his hand a hammer and nails, and unconcernedly told the native cook that he would come back to make imaginary repairs.

After the mate had put several hundreds of yards between himself and the governor's house, he stopped and called down all manner of vengeance upon Klinger's head. Then he took a wide détour arriving breathless at the landing, hired a boat and was soon in Commander Tazewell's cabin.

While Stump retailed the conversation he had heard between the count and Klinger, Commander Tazewell's indignation mounted higher and higher. When he heard of the plan to rob his government of Tua-Tua as a coaling station and the fact that his contract had fallen into Klinger's hands, the commander's brows gathered in a perplexed frown. There must be a spy on his own ship! In no other way could the paper have been stolen from his cabin.

Phil, answering the commander's summons, was soon informed of Stump's exciting news.

The commander was disappointed in seeing no surprise in Phil's face when he heard

that the Tua-Tua lease was in Klinger's hands.

"Then you have suspected that there is a spy on board this ship," the commander exclaimed incredulously, "and have not confided your suspicions to me! I'm surprised and disappointed in you, Mr. Perry," he added accusingly.

Phil flushed guiltily. "It was really not a suspicion, sir," he stammeringly answered, "and has only developed into a suspicion after listening to the news Stump here brings."

The lad then detailed what had occurred the night the "Talofa" and Captain Scott had entered the harbor, when he had thought he had surprised Schultz, the captain's orderly, endeavoring to listen to the conversation between Commander Tazewell and the British commander.

"His explanation, sir," he added, "was so readily given, that I thought I had been mistaken. Then when I learned his name was Schultz, the suspicion returned; only that didn't seem sufficient proof to accuse him of spying. When you told me earlier of the

loss of the lease I again thought of Schultz, but you seemed to think the paper was only mislaid. I'm sorry, sir," Phil stammered in embarrassment. "I see now I should have made a clean breast of it before."

"Don't worry over that, Perry," Commander Tazewell said kindly. "Hindsight, you know, is always better than foresight. If I had been you I doubt if I should have acted differently, so I have no right to blame you. I know you are loyal, and will always act in a way that seems to you right and straightforward."

Stump had been sent forward to seek out O'Neil. The captain had desired that the mate remain on board the "Sitka" for the present, a request which Stump was only too happy to accept.

"The most serious part of this news," Commander Tazewell exclaimed, "is that it shows the whole plot unearthed, and yet I don't see any way now to thwart the conspirators."

"Where's the 'Sacramento'?" Phil asked excitedly.

"At last accounts, in Honolulu, or at least expected there. She sailed from Panama some

weeks ago," Commander Tazewell replied thoughtfully. "There's no cable to Honolulu, so if she is to come here, word must be dispatched by steamer from San Francisco. If Stump has heard correctly, the count knew that a Herzovinian war-ship was waiting in Auckland to bring the government's orders to annex or not to annex. That, according to the count, would depend upon the diplomatic conditions. Of course," the commander added, "there can be no question of a European war over Kapua. The thing would be impossible, and not worth the life of a single soldier or sailor."

Phil shook his head, much puzzled over the situation.

"It's all very confusing to me, sir," the lad said. "The personal feelings between the Herzovinians on one side and the English and ourselves on the other are so strongly antagonistic that I'm sure if we were put ashore together and left there for a week we would be fighting, although for the life of me I can't see what it would be about. I haven't any personal interest in Kapua and really admire the Herzovinians greatly, yet I am as

antagonistic as any one to her getting the islands."

Commander Tazewell laughed in high amusement. "Yes," he replied, "it is remarkable how men isolated as we are focus our minds upon local affairs that should not really influence us. Here am I, out of cable communication with Washington. I see this nation through private individuals plot to take over a group of islands in which the country I represent has one-third share. If I precipitate a fight with a foreign power in order to retain that one-third right given us by treaty, I may find upon receipt of mail that the government has decided to relinquish its claim. Meanwhile through my action blood may have been spilled."

"Why does a government, like ours especially, so often change its mind in these international affairs?" Phil asked.

"It doesn't change its mind often," the commander smilingly replied, "for it seldom makes up its mind. There is one thing, Mr. Perry, that few people seem to thoroughly understand, and our government has always disregarded. It is the relation between our

international acts and our armed forces: the army and navy.

"If there exists a large army and a navy to back up our demands, then the other countries will cheerfully grant them, but if the army and navy are small and weak, then the demands are not granted."

Phil nodded his head. He was having explained a problem over which he had long puzzled.

"So you believe then that whether Herzovinia gets Kapua or loses it depends upon the relative power of her army and navy?" he asked.

"Exactly; if she wants to seize Kapua I don't see any way to stop it," Commander Tazewell answered. "Whether she will hold it or not must depend upon how highly England and the United States appraise the value of the Herzovinian army and navy to back up her act. If we think she is in earnest and will go to war rather than give up Kapua, then our statesmen must decide what will be the advantages or disadvantages of war to us."

"But," Phil exclaimed, "she couldn't fight

both the United States and England, all at once."

"There, you see, is the true value of her great army and navy," Commander Tazewell answered solemnly. "The two great nations might be able to defeat her, but it would not stop there. Probably many other nations of Europe would become involved."

"Then if Herzovinia had only a small army and navy," Phil said questioningly, "the United States or England would pay no attention to her demands, and she would be forced to give in."

"That's the whole thing in a nutshell," the commander exclaimed. "Let us hope, Perry," he added, "our great nation will be sensible enough to keep always a strong army and navy, so that we can be assured that we can do right without the need of asking some other nation's permission."

As Commander Tazewell paused he unrolled a chart and spread it before him on the cabin table.

"It's nearly twenty miles from here to Fangaloa Bay," he said after a few minutes' silent scrutiny of the chart of the Kapuan Islands.

Phil was at once keenly alert. What was in Commander Tazewell's mind?

"I believe I am fully justified in seizing Scott and his schooner, and with Stump a witness against him we could try him for something very near piracy." Commander Tazewell smiled amusedly as he regarded Phil's eager face, and was prepared for the lad's earnest question.

"Will you go there with the ship?" Phil asked.

"No," the commander replied. "I'm thinking of sending you on a 'cutting out' expedition to bring back Scott and the schooner, either or both. Will you accept the job?"

Phil fairly beamed with joyful anticipation, but he composed himself and answered:

"I'm ready to go anywhere you send me, sir."

"Schultz had best be watched," the commander added. "It's wiser not to show him that we suspect him. He may help us to find out something to our advantage concerning our friends, the count and Klinger.

"I'll tell the executive officer to let you have the steam launch, and he will get it

ready for you beginning after dark. You can select the men you wish to go with you. Tuamana can pilot the launch through the reef at Fangaloa. Is there any suggestion you wish to make?" the commander asked as Phil arose to go from the cabin.

"I'd like to have Mr. Monroe go along to keep me company," Phil replied quickly, "and I thought it might be wise to go ashore now and try to find out from Avao or Mary Hamilton whether the 'Talofa' has reached Fangaloa on her return from her trip to Tua-Tua."

Commander Tazewell readily agreed with the lad's suggestions. "I'll see you before you shove off to-night," he said. "And don't get hurt. Scott and his schooner aren't worth it."

Phil found Sydney and told him all the good news, and then sent for O'Neil and Stump.

The mate gleefully volunteered to go along.

"Can I navigate a schooner!" he exclaimed. "Didn't I bring her into Ukula harbor on the darkest tropical night I ever saw with only the white line of surf as buoys? I'll sail

her back for you, and sit on old 'Bully' Scott's face while I'm doing it."

"He'd be handy to show us where the gear is located, sir," O'Neil said approvingly, "and besides, he knows the crew and can speak their 'lingo.'"

The two midshipmen after having been interviewed by the executive officer, who had come to think highly of the activity of his two young subordinates, were set on shore and at once sought their friend, Alice Lee, to find out what news she had gathered from her native friends.

They found her in the hammock in the "lanai," deep in a book. She greeted them without reserve.

"It's about time you came," she exclaimed. "I've been bursting with news for you."

"What is it?" they both asked eagerly.

"I tried to go up on Mission Hill this afternoon and was refused," Alice declared excitedly. "The count has established a 'lookout' station there. I saw half a dozen Herzovinian sailors with a long spy-glass mounted on a tripod; and I saw signal flags too," she added.

The midshipmen exchanged glances.

"Looking for the 'Sacramento,'" Sydney exclaimed. Then they told Alice of the conversation Stump had overheard and of their mission for that evening.

"That isn't all my news," Alice said proudly. "One of the 'Talofa's' crew, a Fiji Islander, arrived in Ukula, and Klinger rode away with him toward Saluafata. Mary Hamilton came and told me that an hour ago."

The two lads shook hands with each other in boyish excitement and joy, while Alice looked on thinking they had suddenly gone crazy.

"Don't you see," Phil explained to Alice's inquiry. "Scott and his schooner are back, and Klinger is going to get the lease and explain that Stump will come later. We'll catch the schooner anyway, and maybe Scott and the lease will also be on board."

CHAPTER XVIII

A "CUTTING OUT" EXPEDITION

FOUR bells was struck on board the "Sitka," as the steam launch quietly shoved off from the gangway.

The launch had been stripped of its bulky canopy and lay lean and low in the water. No lights were shown, and in the darkness the little craft hoped to leave the harbor unobserved.

"What's that for?" Sydney suddenly exclaimed in alarm.

The "Sitka" had turned on all her searchlights and was sweeping them in small arcs over the shipping and along the shore line.

Phil chuckled.

"Throwing sand in their eyes," he said. "See that light held stationary on our 'lookout' hill. They can't see us with that illumination in their faces. There's another light playing over the Herzovinian war-ship and

another on the Matafeli district where the count lives. It's just a measure of safety. I heard Commander Tazewell give the order for it as we left the cabin a few minutes ago."

"Those search-lights will nearly put your eyes out," O'Neil declared. "When I was serving in a torpedo boat destroyer during the war manœuvers we used to run full speed toward a battle-ship after we had sighted her steaming along with no lights showing. Then when she saw us and turned her search-lights on us, there was nothing doing. We couldn't see nothing, and we didn't know how far we were away."

The launch cleared the reefs at the entrance, and stood to the eastward. The craft was under the pilotage of Chief Tuamana, who had been delighted to aid his white friends against those he assumed to be his enemies. A course was laid from the chart to take them clear of the reef, and also far enough away so as not to be observed by natives fishing along its edge.

"Commander Tazewell especially cautioned secrecy," Phil said, as he directed O'Neil, who was at the helm, to give the reef a wide berth. "We are to act only at night, and sur-

prise old man Scott. The natives on shore are to know nothing of our move."

"What's the idea of that?" Sydney asked.

"The fear that if the count heard we had cut out the 'Talofa' he might use it as an excuse to precipitate matters, I suppose," Phil replied. "He could give the episode vivid coloring and claim he had hoisted his nation's flag to prevent the high-handed and lawless acts of the American and English naval commanders. It would sound well to those who didn't know all the particulars. Of course," Phil added, "another reason is that if we are seen, Scott may be informed and might resist us by force, and then the situation wouldn't be so simple; especially if he should use natives of Kataafa's side to resist us."

Sydney contemplated in silence the gunner's mate at his side who was critically examining a machine gun on its portable tripod.

"The executive seems to have supplied us with enough force to overcome resistance," the midshipman declared quietly. "A machine gun and ten sailors with rifles should easily overpower Captain Scott and his crew."

Stump had listened in silence. Hearing

Sydney's observation he joined in the conversation.

"You'll need all you've got to get ahead of 'Bully' Scott," he exclaimed wagging his head sagely, "unless you surprise him. This here 'Bully' Scott is a tough man to go fooling with. I seen him lay out nearly a dozen natives in the Solomon Islands. They were all trying to kill him with head knives and war clubs. He's a dead shot with a revolver, and he usually carries two of them."

"I reckon he will not resist us, Stump," Phil said confidently. "We represent the law, you see, and if he hurts any one, he'll be liable to a long term in jail."

Stump laughed mirthlessly.

"He's entitled to that already," he exclaimed. "That's why he wants to lay his hands on me. And if he should," the mate added with an involuntary shiver, "the 'Talofa' would arrive at its next port and 'Bully' Scott with tears in his eyes would tell of the loss of his dear friend Stump, drowned at sea."

"What's the plan, Phil?" Sydney asked some time later.

"We go first to Fangaloa Bay. If the 'Talofa's' there we simply seize her and every one on board and take her back to Ukula harbor," Phil replied.

"That sounds simple enough," O'Neil declared, "and, Mr. Perry, it'll be just as easy as saying it. Only," he added jokingly, "we'll have to keep our eyes on Stump. He's likely to get mixed up with his old friend and shipmate 'Bully' Scott."

The night was extremely dark, but the thunder of the surf on the reef guided them in keeping beyond that peril. The land loomed dark on the starboard hand, while overhead a brilliant starry sky accentuated the blackness of the night. Ashore, bright lights sprang up from time to time, revealing the location of native villages along the beach.

Tuamana, a cape of native cloth slung picturesquely over his shoulders, stood silently beside O'Neil. The chief's eyes were continually upon the shore line. He was for the most part silent, but would occasionally turn to Phil, pointing to a group of lights ashore or to a deeper shadow against the loom of the land and inform him shortly of their bearings.

"Saluafata," he said as the thunder of the breaking surf grew louder and a ghastly whiteness appeared on the bow.

Phil glanced at his watch. "Eleven thirty," he said. "We're about half-way."

Most of the crew had curled themselves down in the bottom of the boat and lay motionless. Phil envied them. Even with the prospect of a hand to hand fight, against what odds they could not know, their healthy minds were wrapped in sleep.

"What brought Captain Scott back, Stump?" Phil asked after an unbroken silence of some minutes. "He was supposed to have left the islands after landing the guns."

"Klinger said Scott heard that the Herzovinians owned the government, and that he was therefore safe to come and get his copra," Stump answered. "But I know that he's looking for me. I know too much. I've seen more than one poor black boy kicked overboard when Scott was in one of his wild fits of anger."

"Why have you stayed so long with such a brute?" Sydney asked.

"Well, sir," Stump replied, "I reckon I

was always too scared to run away. And then," he added fearfully, "I've got a few things to answer for, too. I was driven to 'em, but before a court that don't count. I hain't got murder, though," he declared. "'Tain't in no way as bad as that. Captain Scott swears I shoved a black boy overboard in a gale of wind, but 'fore God, it was an accident, and I asked to lower a boat and go after him, but Scott wouldn't let me. I've done with it, and am willing to take whatever medicine is coming."

"Fangaloa," Tuamana grunted, pointing to the dim outline of a high cone-shaped mountain looming up on the starboard hand.

The word soon spread among the sleeping forms, and presently all were keenly alert. The gunner's mate had secured his machine gun to be prepared to rake the enemy with a withering fire in case of opposition.

The launch turned between two bold headlands and steered for the dark land. They were running into a long narrow arm of the sea—the Bay of Fangaloa, a mile wide and three miles deep.

Every eye was strained ahead, gazing for

the schooner. There were but few lights on the distant beach. Most of the natives were long ago in bed.

Quietly the sailors had taken their stations. Each carried only a revolver; for night use rifles are less effective. Phil and Sydney stood side by side ready to lead their men on board the "Talofa." The darkness was intense. The bold and densely wooded mountains rising precipitously above them cast a deep shadow over the waters of the bay.

A satisfied grunt from Tuamana was the first news that their quarry had been located. The chief's keen eyes had perceived the ghostly outline of a sail. In a few minutes all recognized the schooner, lying near the extreme end of the bay. Her great mainsail was set and its whiteness against the land had first revealed her presence.

No one spoke. The steam launch had been slowed in speed, and all precautions taken to assure surprise. The fireman ceaselessly watched his boiler to prevent a sudden escape of steam and the machinist used oil freely to prevent the slightest machinery squeak which might reveal their presence.

In silence, except for the slight churn of the propeller and the swirl of water thrown from the bow of the launch in its progress, O'Neil steered straight for the black hull now distinctly outlined scarcely five hundred yards away. No lights were visible on the schooner —a good sign. The crew were either all asleep or ashore.

The launch, with its engine stopped, swung alongside. Ready hands made her fast, and a moment after the deserted decks were held by the Americans.

"You look out for the forward hatch," Phil ordered Sydney. "O'Neil, take a half dozen men with Stump, and make sail. Tell the launch to take a line and tow us out of the bog."

Phil with two sailors moved toward the cabin ladder. He gazed below into forbidding blackness.

"I wonder if Scott is down there?" he exclaimed. "If he is he will soon be up when he feels his ship under way."

Phil heard the sound of the capstan as O'Neil and his men began to weigh the anchor. Then the squeak of gear grinding through

unoiled blocks gave proof that the foresail and head-sails were being set. Soon a slight jar and the louder noise of the churning of the launch's propeller told him the schooner was under way, and then slowly she moved through the quiet water of the bay toward the sea.

"Keep watch here," Phil said to his two men. Then with his revolver in hand he slowly, cautiously descended the ladder. Stories told of this pirate Scott came into his mind. At the bottom the darkness was oppressive. Phil endeavored to listen for the breathing of the man he sought, but his own heart-beats deafened him. He did not know which way to turn. Where were the sleeping quarters?

He fumbled in his pockets and drew forth a box of matches. Then quickly striking one he held it above his head. He was in a small cabin containing a table and a few leathered bunks. A door opened to his right. Advancing he held the match before him. He saw the small room was a stateroom, but it was empty. Captain Scott was not on board the ship. Disappointedly he mounted the ladder and turned his steps forward.

Sydney and O'Neil had aroused the crew, six men in all, and had employed them hauling on ropes. Stump was talking with a tall native as Phil approached.

"Captain Scott isn't in the cabin," he informed his companions; "but we have his vessel, anyway."

"Did you go down there alone?" Stump exclaimed incredulously.

"I certainly did," Phil replied, laughing half nervously at the evident surprise in Stump's voice, "and my heart's still racing like that steam launch engine."

"Mine would have stopped," Stump declared. "I'm glad he ain't on board. I never want to see the old pirate again until I see him hanged."

"What does his crew say?" Phil asked.

"This is Maka," Stump said indicating the tall native. "Captain Scott, he says, went ashore to meet Klinger somewhere, he doesn't know where, and left word he'd sail in the morning."

"Well, he won't." Phil chuckled. "Gee! I'd like to see his face when he arrives and sees no schooner."

The little steam launch toiled away, dragging its huge burden toward the sea.

"It's two o'clock," Phil said looking at his watch by the light of a lantern. "There will be little wind before morning, and then it will probably be offshore. I think we'd better have the launch tow us well clear of the reefs before we attempt to haul aft the sheets."

O'Neil nodded in agreement.

"We'll have to arrange watches," Phil said. "I'm overpowered with sleep myself, and I suppose we all are in about the same condition. We've four of us to stand watch. I insist on standing the first hour, then I'll call you, Syd."

O'Neil protested: "Excuse me, sir. You and Mr. Monroe are young and need lots of sleep. I couldn't sleep if I tried. Stump here sometimes stays awake for days at a time. It's all a matter of habit, this sleeping is. Now, please, you gentlemen go and turn in, and I'll call you if anything happens that you ought to know of."

Phil was really too sleepy to protest vigorously, so he and Sydney curled down on

mattresses, brought up from Scott's cabin, and were soon sound asleep.

When Phil woke the sun was high up and the "Talofa" was under sail. The steam launch raced along several hundred yards away. The breeze was light and the water smooth.

"There's smoke out there on the horizon," O'Neil said as he came aft, looking as fresh as if he had slept the whole night through. "There ain't any steamer expected, is there, sir?"

Phil shook his head. "Not for another week, anyway," he replied excitedly. Then he gazed toward the land. "We're twenty miles from shore, at least," he added.

"The wind's offshore, but the trade wind will be stronger out here when it starts up, and we can then make Ukula in one leg," O'Neil replied.

Phil considered for several minutes. Was the smoke a Herzovinian war-ship or was it the "Sacramento"? If it was the latter it would be of great service to the admiral on board to know the conditions in Kapua before he was sighted by the watchful sailors on Mission

Hill. If it turned out to be the other warship no harm could be done by taking a look at it.

"Bear up, O'Neil, and run down and investigate," Phil said quietly. "Hail the launch and tell her to proceed toward Ukula, but keep outside until we catch up, and watch us for signals."

With the wind free the fast schooner fairly skimmed over the water, racing toward the curl of smoke barely distinguishable.

"Smoke down here means something," O'Neil said as he returned with Stump after seeing that all the running gear was properly belayed and the sails trimmed. Then he added cheerfully, "We'll be eating breakfast at the expense of our absent friend Captain Scott in a few minutes. Stump knows where he keeps his eatables, and we've got a seaman with us who can make as good coffee as you can buy in a first-class 'Frisco' hotel."

It seemed ages to the anxious Americans before the small speck of a hull appeared beneath the curl of misty smoke.

"She's painted white," O'Neil exclaimed as he handed the binoculars to Phil. The

midshipmen each took a look, then shook their heads. She was too far away. "Imagination, O'Neil," Sydney suggested.

"Another fifteen minutes and we'll know for sure," Sydney said nervously. "I hope it's the 'Sacramento.'"

The steam launch had disappeared, swallowed up against the background of the high mountains of the island.

Slowly the speck on the horizon took shape. Anxiously the Americans watched, each eager to recognize some outline that would tell them whether the strange vessel was flying their flag or that of the power which to all intents and purposes was their rival, if not enemy.

"What will you do," Sydney asked Phil excitedly, "if she's not the 'Sacramento'?"

Phil glanced aloft at the straining canvas. The wind had come out at southeast, and on the sea whitecaps of foam were here and there appearing. He knew that within the hour or even less a strong trade wind would be blowing fair for Ukula harbor.

"We'll try to beat her in," he replied, "and announce her coming to Commander Tazewell. But," he added hopelessly, "what can

he do? We are too weak now to oppose the count's government, and with this reënforcement our chances will be hopeless."

"It's the 'Sacramento,' all right!" O'Neil exclaimed. "See those big bow sponsons for her guns. It's all over but the shouting now for friend Kataafa! He'll be doing a foot-race for his summer capital, and the count will be taking a voyage in a war-ship for his health!"

No doubt longer existed. O'Neil's brisk summing up of the events of the future brought a smile of relief to the lips of the midshipmen. Phil gazed long and earnestly at the approaching war-ship. She had apparently altered her course and was now heading down directly for them.

A few moments later a puff of smoke was seen ejected from the high forecastle and a muffled report was heard some dozen seconds later—the universal message of the sea, announcing, "I desire to communicate."

The big war-ship, her decks crowded with curious sailors, lay motionless in the water as the schooner "hove to" close alongside.

Phil had answered the hail and reported

he had information of importance for the admiral.

A boat shot down from the "Sacramento's" davits, and was soon alongside the "Talofa."

O'Neil tended the boat line and good-naturedly chaffed the inquisitive boat's crew.

"We're doing a little buccaneering, that's all," he answered an eager inquiry as to their mission. "The islanders are fighting between themselves. You fellows came just at the right time. Say," he added, "did you see anything of a Herzovinian war-ship heading this way, burning up the paint on her bottom?"

The coxswain of the whale-boat declared that the schooner was the only sail they had sighted since leaving Honolulu, nearly two weeks ago.

"It's a big ocean, ain't it?" O'Neil said thoughtfully.

Phil stepped down into the whale-boat and was soon being rowed across to the war-ship. The admiral wished to hear the news directly and from Phil in person.

CHAPTER XIX

A REËNFORCEMENT

REAR ADMIRAL SPOTTS, whose flag was flown at the masthead of the cruiser "Sacramento," wasted no time in drawing from Phil the complete story of everything that had happened in Kapua.

The captain of the flag-ship and the admiral's flag-lieutenant were both present in the cabin and followed the lad's narrative with great interest and amazement.

Phil told of the decision by the chief justice for Panu-Mafili, and then the attack upon Ukula by Kataafa and his warriors, armed with guns purchased apparently from the Kapuan firm, of the appointment of Count Rosen as governor, and the appeal for annexation to Herzovinia.

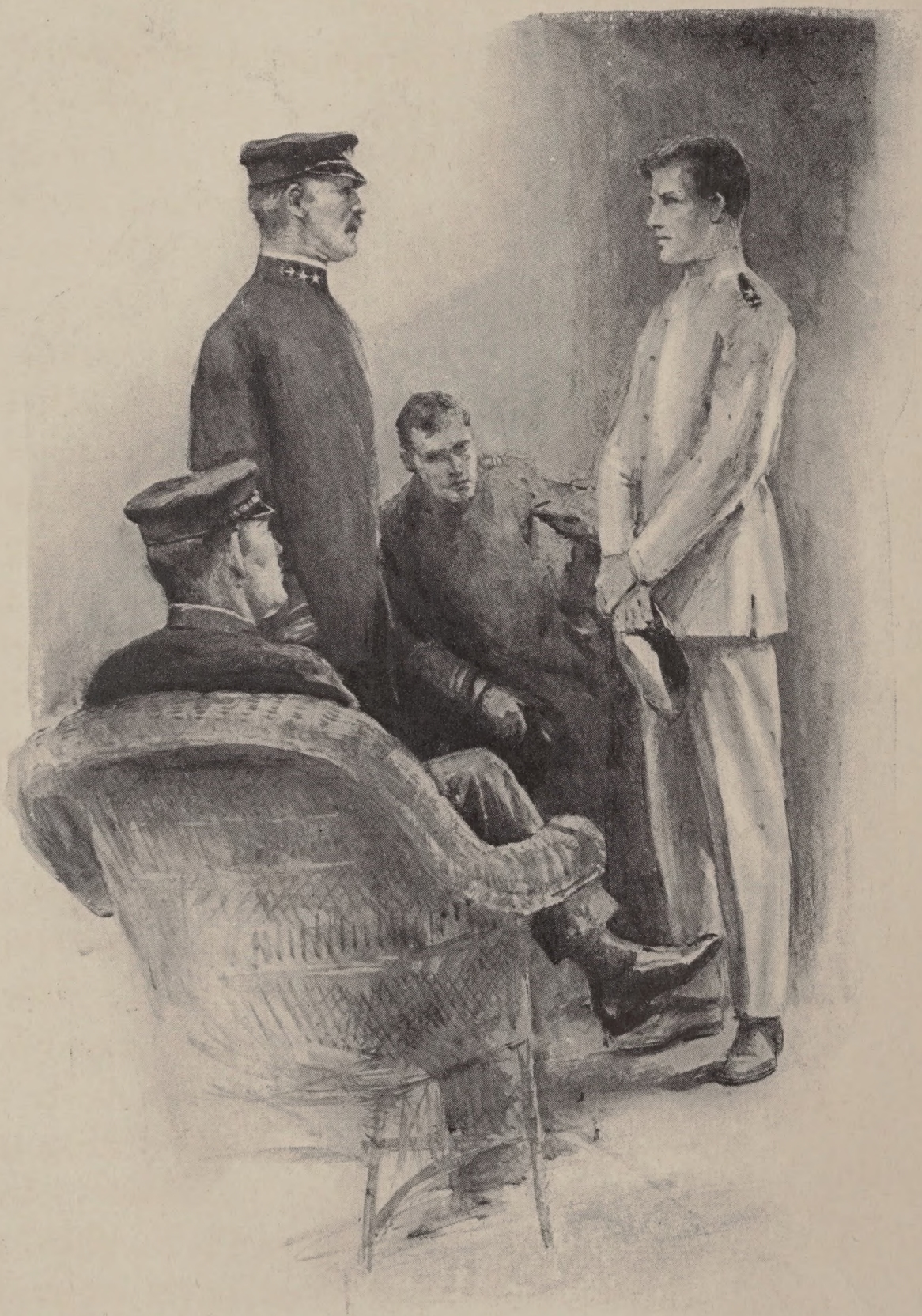
"I think I can now see," the admiral declared, "why the Washington government sent a revenue cutter post-haste from San

Francisco to Honolulu to order me to proceed with my flag-ship to Kapua. A great wrong," he added earnestly, "has been done the treaty, and my duty is clearly to set it right, by force if necessary. I shall consider this Count Rosen an adventurer.

"Yet," he said after a few thoughtful minutes, "you say the count is prepared against my coming. When those of the 'de facto' government see our ship approaching, they are ready to take the responsibility of hoisting the Herzovinian flag over Kapua. Then I shall be powerless; only an order from Herzovinia can remove the badge of annexation. What we do after that will not be an act against the government of Kapua. It will be against the sovereignty of Herzovinia."

A plan had suddenly flashed through Phil's mind. The admiral was quick to see the sudden eagerness in the midshipman's face. A kindly smile spread slowly over his own grizzled countenance.

"You have something rash and daring in mind, I am sure," he said, half in amusement, but half seriously. "You have the local color and inspiration of contact. Tell us your plan."



"IS IT QUITE CLEAR?" THE ADMIRAL ASKED

The humor of the situation suddenly struck Phil, and he blushed to the roots of his hair. "Pardon me, sir, for being so bold," he replied apologetically. "The same thing must have also struck you, sir, and that is the 'Sacramento' must enter Ukula harbor at night and secretly and Commander Tazewell must meanwhile prevent the hoisting of the Herzovinian flag."

All three of his hearers gave an ungrudging assent. The admiral took out his watch. "It's now a little after one o'clock," he said. "We are thirty odd miles from Ukula. You can probably be there by dark. I'll enter the harbor at ten o'clock to-night and shall have my entire force of three hundred men ashore within ten minutes after we anchor. Tell Commander Tazewell I shall leave all details to him, for he knows the situation better than I. Tell him my decision is to uphold the law of the chief justice under the existing treaty until our government orders me to do otherwise."

Phil thrilled with joyful excitement as he listened to the admiral's quiet but decided voice.

"Is it quite clear?" the admiral asked.

"Perfectly, sir," Phil assured him.

"Then I must speed the parting guest." The admiral smiled, and put out his hand.

Phil shook the hand warmly.

"Happy is he who brings young men to his council table," the admiral quoted.

With Phil on board, the "Talofa" lost no time in squaring away for Ukula. The "Sacramento" was seen to turn and head out to sea, so as not to be in danger of discovery from shore. Phil told the plan to his shipmates.

"That's a corker!" O'Neil exclaimed gleefully. "There's just one thing you haven't mentioned," he added seriously. "They'll see the 'Sacramento' coming in from the pilot station and maybe from Mission Hill. The Herzovinian war-ship will also be on the look-out."

Phil nodded. "Yes," he said questioningly.

"Then, sir," the sailorman declared, "we must prevent those at the pilot station sending the news, and blind the other two. A couple of our men can fix the pilot station, and our search-lights can do the rest. They can't see the cruisers with those big glims in their eyes."

"Fine suggestion, O'Neil," Phil exclaimed. "I'll certainly give it to the captain. And by the way, I have a thought," he added eagerly, as the "Talofa" raced toward the distant land, all sails spank full and sheets straining. "We'll get on board the launch, leaving the 'Talofa' outside to come in later after dark. It will create less curiosity. Stump and a couple of men can hold her." He looked at Sydney questioningly. "I reckon, Syd," he said apologetically, "you'll have to miss the fun on shore and stand by the schooner."

Although the midshipman felt somewhat disappointed he did not show it.

"That's natural," he said. "I'll bring her in after dark, all right, and be in time in case there's a row."

They found the steam launch awaiting them about fifteen miles from the harbor, and quickly transferred to her all but Sydney, Stump and two sailors, who remained to sail the schooner into Ukula.

"Don't pile her on the reef," Phil cautioned banteringly, as the steam launch shoved off from the "Talofa's" side and headed at full speed for Ukula.

"We should be in by five o'clock," Phil said as he looked at his watch. "Now," he added, "these are going to be exciting times, eh, O'Neil? I wonder what's coming out of it all?"

"It looks as if that count was getting cold feet," the boatswain's mate replied. "If he'd had more nerve the Herzovinian flag would have been flying on the flagstaff at Kulinuu right now."

Phil shook his head. "It's a pretty big undertaking to annex a kingdom unless you are sure you're going to be backed up," he said.

"It didn't take our admiral long to make up his mind," O'Neil reminded. "And he doesn't know he's going to be backed up, either."

"That's different," Phil replied. "He is only restoring a king to a throne under a law that he considers yet binding. And he has sufficient force to do it."

Chief Tuamana had shown evident and outward signs of great joy when Phil told him that the American admiral was going to uphold the chief justice's decision, and passing a

big Kapuan canoe filled with natives, the delighted chief raised his voice to taunt his enemies, some of whom he recognized, when Phil by main force drew him down and told him forcefully to keep his counsel to himself.

"They're just like schoolboys with a secret, sir," O'Neil said. "Those natives are on their way home, aren't they?" he asked of Tuamana. The launch was not over three miles from the harbor. The "Talofa's" sail was barely in sight on the horizon.

The chief shook his head.

"Going to Vaileli for a dance," he answered in very broken English. "Chief Tuatele is there in that boat; he ask me to go along. He make fun of me." The chief grunted in contempt.

"Do you mean there's going to be a big Siva-Siva there to-night?" Phil asked eagerly.

Tuamana replied in the affirmative. "This day big day at Vaileli plantation. Very big 'Siva-Siva' and 'Talola.'"[1]

As they drew nearer the harbor they saw large numbers of war canoes filled with natives, all dressed in gala attire, paddling out

[1] Talola—A ceremony of giving presents to the one honored.

through the break in the reef, confirming Tuamana's information.

"That's a lucky stroke," Phil exclaimed. "Probably the count and Klinger will both be at the Vaileli plantation, and if so, there'll be no trouble carrying out the admiral's plan. I'm going to find out for sure," he added as an extra large canoe holding nearly forty men and women passed them, its crew shouting and singing in high glee.

"Run up close," Phil said quietly to O'Neil. Then to Tuamana, "Say nothing of our plans," he cautioned, "only find out what's actually going to happen."

The canoe paddlers stopped their efforts and waited. Twoscore eager smiling faces were turned upon the Americans, and from all the musical greeting of "Talofa, Alii" was given.

Tuamana rose and with solemn dignity spoke to the people in the canoe. He was answered by an elderly warrior sitting in the stern of the canoe. Both Tuamana and the Kataafa warrior addressed maintained a haughty but dignified bearing toward each other.

Finally Tuamana nodded, and the old pa-

triarch gave a command. The song again broke forth, and in perfect time the paddles were dipped and the canoe shot on her way.

"All Ukula go Vaileli, to-night," Tuamana said, after the launch had again been headed for the harbor. "Big 'Talola' and 'Siva' to Missi Klinger."

"Fine business!" O'Neil exclaimed. "They'll come back in the morning to find a new king at Kulinuu."

"Kataafa go too," the chief added.

Phil could hardly suppress his joy. Things were certainly coming their way.

As Phil ascended the ladder of the "Sitka," Commander Tazewell anxiously awaited him. But before the commander could ask a question, Phil hurriedly but guardedly outlined the news, and followed his captain into his cabin.

"Schultz has deserted us," the captain told him. "He got ashore during the night—probably let himself down over the side into a waiting canoe. So you can speak out." Phil had been conversing in guarded tones.

The entire situation from beginning to end was discussed, the executive officer and most

of the important officers of the cruiser being present.

"The 'Sacramento' will be here at ten o'clock," Commander Tazewell said after all points had been discussed. "Captain Sturdy and his British sailors will hold all roads leading into Ukula west of the Mulivaii River while we garrison Matautu to that river. A squad will take care of the pilot station, and guards must be furnished all the consulates in Matautu."

All listened eagerly. The time all had looked forward to was fast approaching.

"Lieutenant Morrison will command our men," the captain added, as he rose to his feet in sign of dismissal. "We may of course have opposition, but we must guard against precipitating the fighting. Our duty is only to hold and not to advance. When the admiral arrives he will of course tell us what to do next.

"Tents, rations and supplies will be landed to-night after the sailors are ashore," he added.

Phil remained behind after the officers had filed out of the cabin, having been detained by a word from his captain.

"I want you to take the news to Mr. Lee at once," Commander Tazewell said to the lad, "and show him the necessity for secrecy. No one must know until we are ashore."

Phil made himself presentable, and then was conveyed to the shore by the captain's boat, which on its return carried a letter from Commander Tazewell, addressed to Commander Sturdy of the British war-ship, acquainting him of the change in the situation and the plan for the night.

Mr. Lee and Judge Lindsay were both jubilant over the turn of affairs, while Alice fairly danced with joy. Miss Lee, quiet and dignified, rather shrank from the thought of possible bloodshed. There was only one drop of bitterness in Alice's joy. Phil insisted that Avao should not be told until after the "Sacramento" had entered the harbor, and landed her men. He feared the fatal custom of women's gossip among the Kapuans.

"I sincerely hope this strong stand of our admiral will have the required effect, and that we shall have no further bloodshed," Mr. Lee said solemnly.

"There can be no lasting peace in Kapua,

Lee," the judge exclaimed earnestly, "so long as the islands are administered by three rapacious beasts and animals of prey. A lion and two eagles can never act in harmony. It is best for the people that only one should govern. Herzovinia has the greatest interests on this island; she should govern it. Our presence is but a stick in the molasses."

"I agree with you in principle, judge," Mr. Lee replied, "but even you are not willing to see one nation, in deliberate disregard of the treaty rights of others, seize what is not hers."

"That, my dear sir, is not a matter of politics, but of morals," the judge answered. "Let us decide the justice of the situation; but after that is determined then I am anxious to see this triple government at an end."

When Phil left the consulate the two officials were yet deep in their discussion. As he hurried toward the landing he noted that the town was almost deserted of the usual crowd that gathered along the main thoroughfare at this time of the early evening. The "Talola" at Vaileli was going to be popular.

As Phil's boat rounded to alongside of the gangway, the "Talofa" had just anchored within a few cables' length of the "Sitka."

Preparations were being carried forward with great expedition on board both the American and British war-ships, but everything was being done so quietly that no suspicion had so far been aroused on board the other cruiser anchored only a short distance away from each of the allies.

As the ship's bell sounded two strokes (nine o'clock) a long line of boats filled with armed sailors shoved off from the two ships and were towed by steam launches swiftly toward the shore. Phil and Sydney accompanied Commander Tazewell in their towing steam launch. The "Talofa" had been turned over to a squad of sailormen under a petty officer, to prevent the native crew from attempting to take her out of the harbor.

Phil's eyes were upon the dark outlines of the Herzovinian war-ship as they passed close alongside of her. There was a grim smile of satisfaction in Commander Tazewell's face as he heard loud voices raised in the guttural Herzovinian tongue, apparently the officer

of the watch berating the men on lookout for their slackness. Then came a hurrying of footsteps upon the deck and finally a hail in broken English.

"Is there trouble on shore?" the voice called hesitatingly.

Commander Tazewell waited several seconds before replying.

Once more the voice was raised, this time more loudly. He had apparently just discovered a second line of boats on the other side of his ship, ladened deeply in the water with sailormen.

"Has there been a fight on shore? Why are you landing your men?"

"Just a precautionary measure," Commander Tazewell's clear-cut voice answered. "Is your captain on board?"

"No, sir," came back the answer. "He has gone to Vaileli."

"It's no matter," Commander Tazewell replied. "When he returns I will explain everything to him."

"Thank you, sir," said the voice, but it was plainly noted that the speaker was greatly perplexed.

"Only a young officer left on board," Commander Tazewell said quietly to the midshipmen, "and taken off his guard, he doesn't know what to do."

"What could he do?" Phil asked excitedly.

Commander Tazewell shook his head doubtfully. "He might land his men too, but that could not defeat our purpose. With the English and American sailors in military control of Ukula, it would take a stronger man than Count Rosen to annex the islands."

The boats glided alongside the wharf at the foot of the Siumu road and the sailors, their accouterments rattling musically, scrambled upon the dock and quickly formed their companies. But few commands were given. Each officer knew his station already.

The English commander, fairly beaming with joy, joined Commander Tazewell on the dock.

"I say, that admiral of yours is a jolly good sport, and we're behind him with every man and gun," he exclaimed effusively, "and we're not much beforehand, either," he added. "The natives all say that the Vaileli 'Talola' was arranged by Count

Rosen in order to inform Kataafa and his warriors that the islands will be annexed as soon as their war-ship, hourly expected, arrives. It's a sort of informal annexation, don't you know. And they'll come back and then, as you Americans say, they'll 'wake up.'"

Commander Tazewell joined in the laugh. The dock was clear. All the men landed had gone to their stations, and their boats had been towed back to their ships to be filled with tentage and provisions.

"By now," he said grimly, "there probably are many eager messengers hurrying to acquaint those at Vaileli of what is happening on the beach of Ukula."

Phil was suddenly aware of Avao's presence at his elbow.

"Kataafa's men all take guns," she whispered guardedly. "Mary Hamilton, she go too to Vaileli. What are sailors going to do?" she asked excitedly.

"You'll see to-morrow, Avao," Phil replied evasively.

"Too few men," Avao persisted anxiously. "Kataafa many thousand."

"What does she say?" Commander Taze-

well asked, suddenly noting the eagerness in the girl's manner.

Avao repeated what she had told Phil.

"We'll have about three hundred more inside a half hour, Avao," Commander Tazewell assured her. "Don't you think we can stand off an attack with those?"

"Fa'a moli-moli,"[1] she said humbly; "but, Alii, I know my people, and I afraid bad men may tell them fight. Suppose I go to the count and say do not permit armed natives to come to-night back to Ukula. If they come maybe have big fight."

"There seems to be something in what the girl says, Tazewell," Commander Sturdy exclaimed. "Of course our plan is to refuse them entrance, and open fire if they persist. Yet we'd like to prevent a fight if we can win without it."

Commander Tazewell remained silently thoughtful for several minutes. To him the plan savored too much of asking the count a favor. However, it was in the cause of humanity. If word was to be sent the girl could not take it alone. An officer from

[1] Fa'a moli-moli—Excuse me.

his command must go. He turned his eyes toward the midshipmen, standing silently awaiting the decision.

"Perry, will you go to the count at Vaileli plantation?" he said quietly. "Explain the situation and see if he will agree to prevent bloodshed. To-morrow we can treat with him. Monroe," he added hurriedly, "please take my gig and tell the executive officer of the 'Sitka' about using the search-lights beginning at fifteen minutes of ten."

Sydney saluted, gulped down his disappointment and turned toward the waiting boat. He had been on the point of asking to go with Phil.

"You and Avao can get mounts at the consulate," Commander Tazewell continued, turning to Phil, who stood like a sprinter ready to run or a hunting dog about to be unleashed.

CHAPTER XX

THE TABLES TURNED

ALICE helped Phil and Avao saddle two of her father's ponies.

Time was too precious for conversation, and Phil spoke only in monosyllables, much to Alice's disgust.

"We are going to the plantation house at Vaileli," he had told her, "but just what we expect to accomplish I don't exactly know."

As he gave a last tug at the girth bands of the two animals, and lifted Avao on to her side-saddle, he looked about for Alice, but she had disappeared into the darkness of the stable.

"Come on, Avao," he exclaimed eagerly; "we've got to do the entire distance on a run if our ponies can stand it." He shook loose his reins after leaping into the saddle and dug his heels into the pony's flanks. The pony, believing it meant a race, sprang smartly forward with an eager whinny of delight, and

away he raced through the gate of the consulate. Avao followed only a few lengths behind.

They had gone several miles at a rapid pace, when it became evident that a third horseman was following.

Phil was greatly disturbed when Alice, mounted on her father's Australian horse, a larger and much sturdier breed than the native pony, drew up beside them.

"I have learned enough not to ask permission when I want to go with you," she exclaimed between breaths. "Now, don't be angry. I'm in no danger from the natives."

They found the road deserted. The villages through which they passed at breakneck speed were dark and empty.

"Look," Avao exclaimed. "Vaileli!"

A bright light, apparently caused by a huge fire, had sprung into view not far distant. As they raced forward they now passed on the road natives, singly and in twos and threes, hurrying toward the scene of festivity.

At the massive stone gateway leading into the plantation, the three drew rein and allowed their gasping ponies to walk.

As they drew nearer they saw that many fires had been kindled. The great space in front of the plantation house was flooded with light, about which hundreds of men and women had gathered. All were in gala attire. Each of the warriors carried his precious gun, with his cartridge belt of webbed material worn jauntily over his naked shoulder.

"Where shall I find the count?" Phil asked.

Avao fearlessly greeted the people, who gazed in amazement at the intruders. She called many by name and they, like children, soon forgetting their grievance, smiled back and bade her welcome.

"The count is at the house, they say," the girl answered Phil's question.

"You and Avao remain mounted," Phil said, as they approached the low bungalow of the plantation, used as a residence for the manager and his white overseers. He noted that the wide porch was crowded with people dressed in white, and as he got closer he recognized the count's strong figure with the high chief Kataafa standing beside him.

The great delicacy of his mission suddenly

flashed upon him. Here were gathered nearly five thousand warriors, all armed with modern rifles. The power represented was in the hands of the two men before him. They could by one word hurl the entire assemblage upon the sailors now ashore in Ukula. Then another face appeared in the crowd, the sphynx-like countenance of "Bully" Scott, the man whose schooner Phil had taken. Did he know!

Throwing his horse's reins to Avao, Phil slipped from his saddle and advanced up the steps of the porch. The count received him with but scant courtesy. No attempt was made to hide his displeasure. Phil knew that all eyes were upon him, and felt their hostile stare. It was a situation calculated to disconcert the boldest. Phil steeled himself to hide his great nervousness.

"I come from my captain." He heard his own voice as if from a long way off. There was an ominous silence all about him. "My message is for your ear alone, Count Rosen," he said.

A deep frown of annoyance furrowed the count's brow.

"Isn't this time inopportune?" he exclaimed angrily.

Phil appreciated that every moment was valuable. The news of the landing of the sailors was on the way. The runners that they had passed on the road were probably bringing the unwelcome tidings.

"It is of the highest importance," the lad replied tensely. "Otherwise you must know that my captain would not have sent me at this time."

Phil noted a suspicion of alarm in the count's face. Suddenly a buzz of excitement disturbed the quiet, and Phil, glancing about quickly, following people's gaze, saw the flash of search-lights from the direction of Ukula.

"That is what I have come to explain," Phil added, gaining confidence. The "Sacramento" was entering the harbor. In a few minutes, the admiral had said, three hundred sailors would be on shore to reënforce Commander Tazewell's men.

The count without other than a sign to follow him turned and entered the house.

In a room giving off from the hall, and

lighted only by a single oil lamp, he stopped and motioned Phil to speak.

"An American admiral has arrived, and all the American and English sailors and marines are now holding Ukula. Commander Tazewell begs that you will use your good offices to prevent useless bloodshed. Your warriors must not attempt to return to-night. To-morrow the admiral will hold council, and invites you to come to arrange a peaceful settlement. That is all, sir," Phil added finally.

The count's face was livid, while the hand that pulled his long moustache shook like an aspen. Words for once failed him. He knew that he had played and lost.

Footsteps from the hall heralded the approach of others. Phil's heart sank. Had the news of the landing of the sailors already come? Klinger and Scott had entered the room. Phil gazed at them, but saw only displeasure in their faces. The greeting he had been about to give was withheld.

Finally the count spoke. His voice was husky. The blow had been severe.

"I'll do what I can. Now go!" He half

shoved Phil out of the room. "No earthly power can save you if you are not away before that savage horde out there has learned this insult to their king."

Phil half stumbled down the steps and flung himself into the saddle.

"Ride fast, Avao," he ordered sharply, "straight for the gate, and, Alice, you follow her. Go on, faster, faster." He herded them before him.

The natives in their path quickly got out of their way and called after them "Faimalosi,"[1] thinking that they were only enjoying a pony race.

Before they had reached the gate of the plantation the news of the landing of the sailors had arrived.

"They have heard from Ukula," Alice called from over her shoulder, indicating a group of armed natives squatting by the side of the road feasting upon fruit stripped from trees in their near vicinity, "and are wondering what it means." Even as she spoke to Phil, one of the group called out questioningly to Avao. The native girl tossed back an an-

[1] Faimalosi—Go it.

swer, and her words apparently were satisfactory and caused a laugh.

Phil heaved a sigh of relief as they swung through the gate. By mutual consent their horses were slowed to a trot, and the three drew close together to converse.

"What did the count say?" Alice questioned eagerly.

"He promised he'd do what he could," Phil replied, his voice unsteady from the recent excitement. "I'm afraid the 'Frankenstein' he has created has grown beyond his control. We're bound to have war."

When Phil and his companions arrived in Ukula the town resembled an armed camp. The roads leading to the village were all strongly held. Machine guns and field pieces had been mounted behind hastily constructed barricades. The main strength of the forces was encamped in the town proper between the two streams. The British sailors were in garrison at Kulinuu. The cruiser "Sacramento" had anchored in a commanding position with her heavy broadside bearing upon the town.

Phil found Commander Tazewell and the

admiral at the Tivoli Hotel, where the latter had taken up his headquarters, and gave them an account of his mission.

"We must not relax vigilance," Admiral Spotts said, while Phil saluted, ready to withdraw. "I believe that no hostilities will be thought of until to-morrow. Then we shall see what can be done through diplomacy to avoid bloodshed."

Phil and Sydney occupied that night their old room in the consulate.

"When I got on board and gave the executive officer the captain's message about the search-lights," Sydney said, after Phil had graphically told of the trip to Vaileli and of the great gathering of armed warriors, "he looked queerly at me and exclaimed, 'Why, he told me that himself the last minute before leaving the ship.' So, you see, the captain must have thought there was danger, and didn't want to risk us both."

"It would be a terrible loss," Phil exclaimed laughingly.

The next morning Count Rosen and Klinger rode through town back to their homes in the Matafeli district.

At ten o'clock the American admiral and his officers, in full dress uniform and accompanied by the American and English consuls and Judge Lindsay, proceeded to Kulinuu. About a thousand loyal natives had collected; all were unarmed. A large bright Kapuan flag had been brought ashore from the "Sitka" and O'Neil had bent it on to the halliards of the tall flagstaff.

When all was ready, the band struck up a stirring march and the lawful king, Panu-Mafili, declared eligible by the chief justice, put in an appearance. He was strongly escorted by sailors from both the English and American war-ships.

To Phil the ceremony was very impressive. The day was beautiful and clear; a gentle breeze ruffled the deep green waters of the bay, and stirred lazily the tall cocoanut palms overhead. The loyal natives, supporters of Panu, in all their gorgeous coloring, and led by Tuamana, rose to their feet and sang their savage song of welcome to their king Malea-Toa Panu-Mafili.

The chief justice conducted the ceremony. He first read his decision. Then he gave the

oath to Panu. As the judge finished he raised his hand and the song to their king floated out upon the balmy air: "Panu o Tupu-e-Kapua." O'Neil and Marley hauled away on the halliards, and as the great white, red and blue flag appeared above the tops of the cocoa-nut trees, the three war-ships boomed forth a national salute in its honor. The Herzovinian war-ship alone remained sullenly silent.

Panu-Mafili was now the rightful king. Five miles away at Vaileli, Kataafa and his five thousand warriors were camped. Panu could muster barely a thousand men, and hardly a hundred guns.

"We have him on the throne," Phil heard the admiral exclaim as each officer beginning with the American naval commander-in-chief pressed forward to congratulate the young king. "But we've got to hold him on with our bayonets."

At noon the British war-ship was under way, and standing out of the harbor. Commander Tazewell, the midshipmen and Alice watched her go from the consulate porch.

"Where's she going?" Alice asked in great surprise, for not an hour ago the war-ship's

captain, Commander Sturdy, had been present at the coronation of the new king.

"She's going to the island of Kulila," Commander Tazewell told his hearers guardedly, for there were many natives on the lawn in front of the house and within ear-shot. "The island, you know, is about sixty miles to windward[1] and the inhabitants are almost entirely loyal to the Malea-Toa family, of which Panu is the acknowledged head. Commander Sturdy has agreed to bring a ship-load of natives and arm them from his own stock of guns. That will give us at least five hundred reënforcements."

The allies at once began to prepare their forces for serious work. Companies of the loyal natives were being mustered in with English and American sailormen to lead them, while white officers were designated to command the combinations made by joining several companies. In all, a force of eight native companies of a hundred men each, armed with American and English rifles,

[1] The prevailing wind in the islands of the South Seas is southeast—so "windward" or "leeward" means easterly or westerly in direction.

was encamped in the Malae under the command of Lieutenant Tupper of the British cruiser; while encamped along the main street of Ukula five hundred English and American sailors were ready in addition to aid in repelling an attack by the old fox Kataafa, who had been himself now declared a rebel by Admiral Spotts.

The count and Klinger did not long remain in Ukula. That afternoon they departed quietly to Vaileli plantation.

During the afternoon Phil and Sydney rode with Commander Tazewell along the Siumu road. All three were armed with revolvers, but no sailors or natives were taken along.

"Kataafa has written the admiral the most remarkable letter," the captain said after they had left behind the last vestige of civilization. "He says that he does not question the right of Panu-Mafili to be king, but that by the Kapuan custom he also is king, and that according to their traditional custom, as old as their race, he will fight Panu for the office. He says that he has no war with the white men, and that no harm will come to them if they do not attack him."

"What answer did the admiral send back?" Phil and Sydney asked in a breath.

"That Panu-Mafili was now under the protection of the two allied powers, and that if Kataafa attacked him the admiral would consider it an attack upon his own men, and that by so doing Kataafa would have brought on a war with the white men."

"Hello," Sydney exclaimed suddenly reining in his horse. A party of natives, their faces blackened, had silently come from the bush and barred their way. A chief stepped forward and courteously told Commander Tazewell that no one should pass.

While they consulted with the native, many warriors appeared from each side of the road and gazed in friendly curiosity at their visitors.

"He says," Commander Tazewell told the midshipmen, "that Kataafa's troops have surrounded the village of Ukula, and will starve out the inhabitants instead of attacking. That Kataafa has given orders that white men shall not be molested, but must remain within the besieging lines."

"Starve them out!" Phil exclaimed.

"Why, that's impossible. They can catch fish and eat fruit." The Americans had withdrawn some yards from the natives, but remained to observe further.

"How long do you suppose the supply of fruit would last?" Commander Tazewell asked. "Besides, many of the fruit trees in Ukula have been destroyed, and it will take a year for them to again bear fruit. And as for fish, the reefs off Ukula are not good fishing ground, and would not feed one-tenth of the population now gathered in the vicinity of the town."

"Then what are we going to do?" Phil asked earnestly.

"The war-ships will have to give the natives food from their own supplies," the commander replied. "Kataafa is a wily old fox, or else that Herzovinian count is ably advising him. But come," he added, swinging his pony about; "we have received interesting news, and if we are to succeed in this affair, we've got to take the offensive. The food supplies on our ships would be devoured by the horde of natives in the town inside of a week. We shall have to attack Kataafa in order to feed our native allies."

Sydney had been examining the locality where the greater number of natives had shown themselves in their curiosity to see the white men. A gleam of white caught his eye, and before the warriors that had barred the passage of the horsemen could interfere, he had urged his horse ahead a few score of yards. An agile native grasped firmly the horse's bridle and turned Sydney back toward his companions, but not until he had solved the mystery of that gleam of white.

"Captain 'Bully' Scott was with that outfit," Sydney exclaimed as they trotted swiftly toward home. "I distinctly saw him, hidden behind a barricade of earth and banana trees; he was in white clothes, and I saw him distinctly, gray whiskers and all."

"It isn't likely he will remain idle," Commander Tazewell replied, not at all surprised at Sydney's news. "He cannot have any great friendship for us after we have confiscated his schooner, and he knows if he is caught by either an American or an English war-ship he will have to serve a term in jail for his many crimes."

"It's a pity he wasn't on board the 'Talofa'

when we captured her," Phil said. "Now if his character is as black as Stump paints it, he will give us lots of trouble."

Commander Tazewell nodded his head gravely.

"If the count, Klinger and Scott could be disposed of we would find these fine fellows of Kapuans only too willing to bury the hatchet," he exclaimed, "but those three men are like vinegar in the molasses barrel. If blood is shed it will be upon their heads."

CHAPTER XXI

A RECONNAISSANCE

A HERZOVINIAN war-ship had come to join the four other men-of-war, all anchored inside the narrow harbor of Ukula.

The Herzovinian consul at once went on board the newcomer, and afterward he and her captain passed through the allied lines on their way to Vaileli.

That evening many were the rumors in Ukula. Alice and Avao collected the stories from the women.

"Herzovinia has accepted Kataafa's allegiance, and will aid him to conquer and then annex the islands," Alice told the midshipmen that evening, "and also," she exclaimed, "the women say that Kataafa has been persuaded to make a big attack on the town."

"I can hardly believe it," Phil declared, "but apparently the admiral is not willing for us to remain passive in our defense. Have

you heard," he asked, "about the expedition to-morrow?"

Alice shook her head, her eyes big with excitement. "Where?" she asked.

"No one knows," Phil answered. "We start at daylight."

The next morning before dawn a force of one hundred sailors, consisting of both English and Americans, had been formed in column of march on the Ukula road. A machine gun, mounted on a light carriage and hauled by hand, formed a part of the expedition. The midshipmen were detailed to go along as aides to the commanding officer, Lieutenant Tupper.

"We're going to reconnoiter Vaileli plantation, I hear," Sydney said as he and Phil drank their coffee preparatory to joining the expedition, "and gather food for the natives in the town."

"Mind, sir, it's a ticklish business we're starting out on," O'Neil said confidentially to the lads as they joined him. The boatswain's mate commanded one of the new companies of native troops, but had volunteered to go along, after learning that no native troops were to take part in the expedition. "If we do this

at all we should take all the force we've got and fall upon them good and hard. Half measures, sir, are dangerous."

The column started just as the first streaks of dawn appeared in the eastern sky. They traveled by the road which followed close to the beach. On one side was the sea and the other the impenetrable bush. Out beyond the reef the "Sitka" steamed slowly along to guard them in case of an attack by a force beyond their strength to oppose.

The expedition reached the Vaileli plantation by eight o'clock and halted on the same ground where only a few nights before the Kataafa warriors had held their celebrations. No warriors so far had been encountered. The only outward evidence of hostilities were the empty villages passed en route.

A number of cleverly built forts and barricades along the road had been encountered and destroyed by the sailors en route.

"They've all been occupied recently," Lieutenant Tupper declared, "and they are not of native design. Some white man's hand has guided them in their construction, that is evident."

The "Sitka" had entered between the reefs and dropped anchor in deep water within a half mile of the shore.

Lieutenant Tupper with several officers, and among them the midshipmen, approached the plantation house. They saw many black boys, Solomon Islanders, working about the place, but not a white man or a Kapuan was visible.

Klinger finally appeared. Phil saw that he was pale and looked worried.

"Where are the Kataafa men?" the lieutenant asked brusquely. "I see you've been feeding and sheltering them," he added insinuatingly, "and doubtless are now concealing their whereabouts."

"I do not know," Klinger replied stubbornly. "I cannot help it if they take my fruit. I have no sailors to protect my property."

"I've a good mind to take you back with us," the lieutenant said angrily. "You and that count are advising these natives to fight us. Who else is in the house?" Tupper asked, advancing upon the porch.

Klinger held his ground.

"There are no others here," he replied. "You are welcome to search the house if you desire, but I warn you this is Herzovinian property, and you must answer for all insults."

"I'd like to see you strung to a yard-arm," Lieutenant Tupper exclaimed, angrier than ever at the man's cool effrontery.

Phil surprised a sinister gleam in Klinger's eyes that gave him a sudden pang of uneasiness. Did Klinger know where Kataafa and his warriors were hiding?

"We are going to requisition your fruit," the lieutenant said authoritatively. "You can put in your claim for damages, and if I have anything to say in the matter you wouldn't get a shilling."

The sailors had spread out through the beautiful groves of banana and breadfruit trees and were quickly stripping the trees of their fruit and carrying the great bunches down to the beach, where they were being loaded into the cutters of the war-ship.

"There won't be enough to feed a locust on when they get through," O'Neil chuckled. "I'd like to get a hold on that fellow Klinger alone for about ten minutes. I have an idea

he knows where Kataafa and his men are this very minute."

"We're not looking for a fight," Sydney said, shaking his head emphatically. "We're only making a reconnaissance and bringing back food for the town. That's why no natives were brought along."

"I don't like the looks of it," O'Neil declared. "We sent word to Kataafa that unless he attacked we would not disturb him for the present, and he is said to have said the same thing to us. In that case what is he hiding for?"

"Maybe he fears either we or he cannot keep their word," Phil suggested.

O'Neil shook his head.

"Look out for a trick," the sailor insisted, "and besides, I hear Chief Tuatele commands the natives in the Vaileli district, and he is the meanest Kapuan ever born. In fact, they say he has a mixture of Solomon Islander in him."

Lieutenant Morrison and Ensign Patterson from the "Sitka" had listened to the sailor's remarks, and nodded their heads in agreement with his views.

"It's queer we have met no women," Lieutenant Morrison said in his quiet, thoughtful voice, "but of course we go back by the beach road the way we came, and with the guns of the 'Sitka' to back us, I can't believe that even Chief Tuatele would dare attack."

"Let him attack," Patterson exclaimed. "We've got a hundred rifles and a machine gun. I guess he won't find us such an awfully easy mark."

The last boat load of fruit had been sent off to the "Sitka" when the English lieutenant in command of the expedition formed his column for the return march.

"The king of France marched up the hill and then marched down again," he laughed as he gave the command to set the column in motion.

Lieutenant Tupper was in the lead. The road stretched along the seashore, winding in and out in conforming to the irregularities of the beach.

"I say," Lieutenant Tupper suddenly exclaimed, "isn't that road to the left a short cut?" He took out a small pocket chart and consulted it. Then he glanced out to the

"Sitka," which had gotten under way and was following, as before, just beyond the surf on the outer reef. "It will save us nearly a mile, and is shady, all the way, through cocoanut groves."

His mind was made up without more ado, and the head of the column wheeled to the left away from the sea and their supporting war-ship and took the trail leading through the woods.

"Anybody got any wire cutters?" O'Neil asked Phil, who was walking at his side. "Look, sir, both sides barbed wire. Nasty thing to get through in a hurry."

Phil saw that on each side of the road ran a substantially built fence of barbed wire as high as a man's head. The woods here were not very thick. Cocoanut and other trees were plentifully mixed.

They had now reached the top of a rise. The road from there led down and at the bottom a small, swift stream would have to be forded.

The machine gun was being dragged by its crew between the two companies of sailors. As the head of the column entered the stream

it was found that the water was deeper than where it had been crossed nearer its mouth. Phil and Sydney were told to warn the machine gun's crew, and have the rear company give aid if they needed it to get the gun across safely.

The midshipmen left the head of the column just as it was on the point of entering the mountain stream. Phil looked behind as they ran rapidly back toward the machine gun.

"The water's above the men's waists," he exclaimed.

Lieutenant Morrison was waiting at the machine gun when Phil arrived to tell him of the depth of the stream which they were about to cross.

"Childers," the lieutenant said quietly to the gunner's mate in charge of the delicate weapon, "better dismount the gun and have it carried across by hand. We cannot afford to run the risk of getting the mechanism wet." He looked about him and Phil read apprehension in his eyes. "I think it would have been wiser to have returned by the beach road," he added uncomplainingly, but Phil thought only too truly.

"Aye, aye, sir," Childers replied, and as the gun carriage was brought to a stop four men picked up the gun, raising it upon their shoulders. Childers removed the breech mechanism for fear it would fall out. The men with the gun on their shoulders waded into the icy cold water.

The advance company had gone on barely a hundred yards beyond the river, and there had halted to permit the rear company and the machine gun to catch up.

The men on the drag ropes of the gun mount were on dry land when the midshipmen left Lieutenant Morrison, with whom they had been walking, and started ahead to rejoin the leader.

A savage cry from out the jungle on the left brought the entire command to immediate attention. The cry was taken up and increased in volume until the woods rang, and then suddenly came a scattering volley of musketry fire.

Phil and Sydney drew their revolvers. They had halted, gazing in bewilderment into the dense bush, from which there continued to come a multitude of savage shouts

with a scorching rifle fire. The sailors ahead had deployed along the road and were excitedly but blindly firing.

Phil gazed behind him and saw the machine gun had been hurriedly replaced upon its mount, yet the gunner's mate, Childers, was storming furiously at the men about him. They had dipped the breech of the gun into the water in their sudden shock and surprise at the weirdness of the attack.

Phil hastened back in hopes of being able to lend a hand: his familiarity with the gun qualified him for the task, but Childers had already deftly put back the mechanism and was about to feed in the cartridge tape carrying the ammunition.

"Got any oil?" Phil asked excitedly.

Childers pointed to a can in the accessory box whose top was open. Phil unscrewed the top of the oil can and poured its contents over the wetted breech and into the mechanism.

"Bring up the gun," was the cry from the advance company.

With a rush the sailors carried the gun and carriage up the road and swung its muzzle toward the concealed foes.

Childers snapped a cartridge in place while Lieutenant Morrison, seating himself upon the trail of the mount, pointed and pulled the trigger. One shot was heard and then the mechanism jammed.

Again Childers drew back the gas lever, but only one shot could be fired.

"It's put together wrong," the gunner's mate cried out aghast as he slipped out the bolt and examined it.

"The Colt gun won't work!" was the disheartening news that spread up and down the line. The unseen enemy had now become bolder. Many of them disregarding the danger, in their exultation, revealed their half-naked bodies from behind trees, while the sailors made good their expended ammunition in dropping these in their tracks. The white men were being attacked from all sides save one and the volume of fire told only too plainly that nearly a thousand rifles were against them.

"We've got to get off this road and take cover," Phil cried in exasperation as he saw men drop sorely hit near him. Lieutenant Morrison's face was pale and as he rose from

his seat on the gun carriage, he steadied himself upon Patterson's shoulder. His right leg hung useless; a bullet had shattered the bone below the knee.

The two midshipmen seized bayonets from the guns of those fallen and began to hack away at the barbed wire fence in their rear. Others now joined them, while the most part of the sailors threw themselves upon the ground and continued their fire at the flitting figures, only seldom and then dimly visible within the impenetrable bush, on their front and flank.

Lieutenant Tupper was already severely wounded, but he saw that to save his men a retreat was urgently necessary. To remain there in the open was useless and would prove costly if not destructive.

The sailors retreated slowly through the places in the fence, cut laboriously with the bayonets.

"The gun must be abandoned, Childers," Lieutenant Morrison exclaimed in despair, after they had dragged it through the torn fence and Childers had made a last heroic effort to disassemble the breech mechanism in order to locate and repair the defect.

The rebel natives perceiving the retreat threw caution to the winds and now showed themselves in a savage swarm. The sailors made a desperate stand, and at such close range the execution among their delirious enemies was great; but nothing could stop their mad rush.

Phil clung to his wounded lieutenant on one side, while Patterson supported him on the other.

Cries for mercy could be heard behind them, where a wounded sailor was discovered by the eager savages. Then triumphant yells and a scream of terror told the horrible story of the poor fellow's end.

"Leave me," Lieutenant Morrison begged them. "Save yourselves."

The natives were almost within reach when Lieutenant Morrison's body suddenly sank to the ground. A second bullet had reached a vital spot. Phil stopped. Patterson was behind him. He had emptied his revolver with telling effect in holding the enemy at bay in an endeavor to cover the retreat of his stricken friend. Phil now sprang to the ensign's aid and as he did so he could have cried out for joy, for there was O'Neil at his side, cool and

collected, among the terrible dangers, firing his rifle from its magazine. Each shot carried a message of death.

"Run, both of you," the sailor cried out to them. Phil saw Patterson reel, and caught him in his arms. The lad turned the ensign toward him and a great sob of anguish escaped his lips as he saw the death pallor already on the stricken officer's face. The next moment the lifeless body fell at his feet, and almost touching the lifeless body of the friend for whom he had heroically but fruitlessly given his young life.

Turning upon the enemy, who had now hesitated in their advance in face of such unexpected resistance, Phil fired his revolver until empty. Then a crash and a mighty explosion almost threw him to the ground.

"Quick, sir, run; those are our shells," O'Neil exclaimed, and together the two raced for the beach, guided in their flight by the discharges from the guns of the "Sitka," while behind them the rebel natives were left to exult over their victory. Again the invincible white man—papalangi—had been found to be only mortal.

CHAPTER XXII

WAR IN EARNEST

When Phil and O'Neil reached the beach, the "Sitka's" shells were screeching angrily over their heads and exploding in the bush behind them. The sailors had been collected and formed on the beach road to repel an attack. Three officers and eight sailors were missing and a score had received wounds. The command of the force fell to a sub-lieutenant from the English cruiser. Tupper, Morrison and Patterson had been killed and left upon the field.

"There were at least a thousand of them," Sydney exclaimed as he met Phil and grasped his hand silently, thankful for his escape, "and Scott or some white man was with them. Many of the men say they distinctly heard a white man's voice encouraging the natives to charge us."

The sailors were apathetic, stunned. The

suddenness of the attack and their defeat had unnerved every man of them.

"If we could only have used the machine gun," Childers moaned plaintively, "we'd have had a different story to tell."

Little by little the men's shattered nerves were mended. The "Sitka's" shells yet screeched overhead, but the rebel natives had retired.

The commanding officer gave the order and put the force in motion. It was a sadly disheartened band that entered the town of Ukula an hour later.

When the doleful news reached the American admiral, he was beside himself with anger at the white men whom he firmly believed had instigated and made possible the ambush. Far from yielding, all effort was now ordered to be concentrated upon swift punishment to the rebels.

Lieutenant Gant came ashore from the British ship to command all the loyal native troops. Several hundred loyal warriors were now added, having been brought from Kulila. One thousand strong they were mustered, and all were armed with the latest patterns of the

Lee Metford rifle from the British and American war-ships. The white troops, unused to bush fighting, by the admiral's order were hereafter only to garrison the town, while offensive work was to be done exclusively by the loyal native troops. A plentiful supply of white sailors was sprinkled among the native companies, to teach them how to use their weapons and how to take cover.

Through the women the fate of the fallen officers and sailors was learned. All had been beheaded; but Kataafa when he learned of this savage act had ordered the bodies and heads to be buried and their graves marked.

Phil and Sydney were given commands in the native regiment, and O'Neil went with them.

All day and every day they drilled their men. Meanwhile the rebels were drawing their lines closer about Ukula.

The Herzovinian consul had, immediately after the unfortunate fight with the rebels, gone in person to offer his sympathy to the admiral for the sad loss of life. Admiral Spotts received him in stony silence. He listened to his words but vouchsafed no answer, nor even thanked him for his sympathy.

"Against his countrymen, whom he should control," the admiral exclaimed to Commanders Tazewell and Sturdy, after the disconfited consul had departed, "the blood of every man killed in these islands should righteously cry out vengeance."

Phil, who had been present, repeated the admiral's words to O'Neil. The sailorman nodded his head in silence for several minutes.

"What were you going to say?" Phil asked quickly. He had seen a look in O'Neil's eyes, and knew that the sailor was looking at the sad episode from a different standpoint.

"Well, sir," O'Neil replied apologetically, "I am not saying the admiral isn't dead right. That count and Klinger have sure brought on this war and are responsible for the men killed. But, sir," he added, "I was here when twenty Herzovinian sailors were killed and their heads taken by this same Kataafa. They were killed by bullets furnished by Americans and Englishmen. They blamed us then—we blame them now.

"Don't you see, sir," he added earnestly,

"the Herzovinians think we are now 'quits.' They lost twenty sailors; we have lost eleven, including three officers."

"Now," Sydney said thoughtfully, "is the time for the white men to get together and stop this useless war."

Phil and O'Neil gazed at him in surprise.

"When we have lost our first battle," Phil exclaimed scornfully. "Why, Syd, that is contrary to human nature. The Herzovinians might be willing to compromise, but we cannot accept a truce until we have proved that our courage has not been affected. When we have driven Kataafa away from Ukula, then we might be willing to treat for an armistice, but never before."

"I agree with the humanitarian view of Mr. Monroe," a voice from behind them said solemnly. The lads turned to find Judge Lindsay beside them, smiling in fatherly fashion upon them. "Now is the moment of moments to bring together the warring factions. To do so," he added, "we must sacrifice some of our selfish pride. But we would thus spare innocent human lives.

"Have you heard that Klinger has been

arrested, and is now held in jail by our naval forces for the crime of instigating the rebels to attack our sailors?" he asked. The judge spoke without sign of feeling.

"I cannot see," he said after a pause, "what evidence they have against him. He supplied guns to natives to fight natives. That they used their weapons against the white men I am sure was not his wish."

"Begging your worship's pardon," O'Neil said respectfully, "Klinger was here ten years ago, and saw twenty of his countrymen killed through the work of white men of our race. Do you believe, sir, he has forgotten that? Klinger has no fear. When we stood and talked with him at Vaileli before the fight, I thought I saw a look in his face, like one who believes something for which he has long wished was about to happen. He didn't owe us anything, and the line of talk we gave him didn't make him feel any the more kindly toward us. I am dead sure now that he knew that Kataafa's warriors were between us and Ukula, waiting to attack us, but the memory of the monument in Kulinuu for the martyred Herzovinian sailors

kept his mouth shut tight. No, sir, he let us go to our defeat almost with joy in his heart, and somehow," O'Neil added solemnly, almost reverentially, "when I remember that terrible day, just before the hurricane that wrecked us all, I haven't it in my heart to blame him."

"So you were here then," the judge exclaimed in surprise and interest. "Well, I wish I could be the instrument to bring together the two sides, and bring peace to these beautiful islands; but I suppose the blood of our poor fellows cries out for atonement, and we must fight on."

Lieutenant Gant with his native regiment was almost ready to take the offensive.

"We've got to be mighty keen about it," he exclaimed to some of his officers. "A cable is on the way to New Zealand by the mail ship that left to-day. The Powers will soon put a stop to this show when they learn the results of our first battle."

But before Gant could take the field to retrieve the defeat, Kataafa became suddenly bold and advanced his lines within a couple of hundred yards of the allies. They moved

during the night, and strange as it may seem women did not bring the news beforehand.

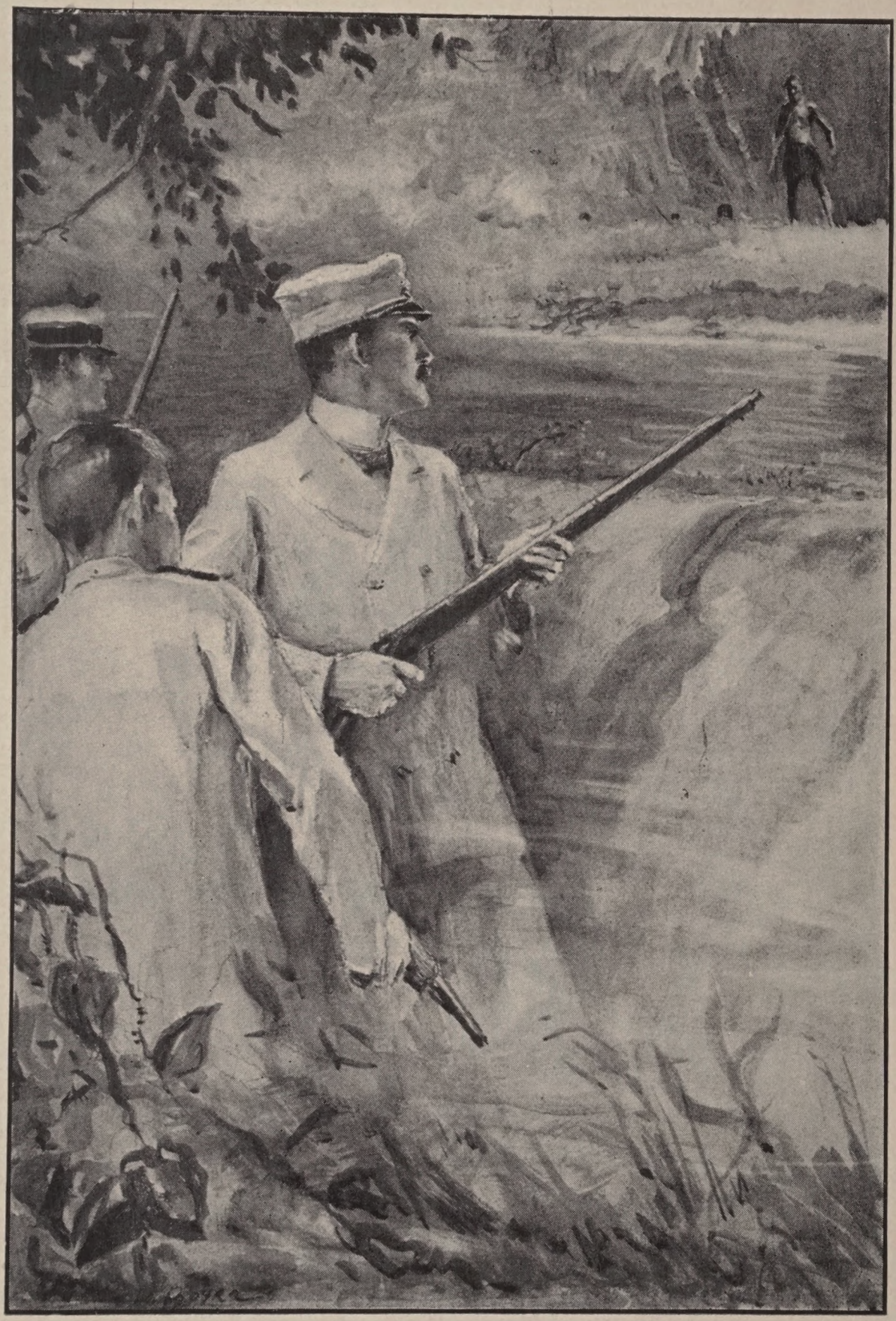
Matautu was the point of attack, and the foreign resident section was swept by bullets.

The natives taunted each other from their earth intrenchments, firing wildly, but neither side made an attempt to leave the protection of their forts and attack.

Across the Fuisa River on the east of Matautu the Kataafa and Panu warriors faced each other, and here Lieutenant Gant had despatched several native companies of reënforcements to hold the road leading into Ukula.

The sailors, by order of the admiral, had been held in reserve. They were only to be used in case Kataafa undertook to rush the earthwork defenses. They held the second line of defense.

"It's a perfect shame," O'Neil exclaimed disgustedly, "to see these fellows throw away their ammunition. Why, a squad of sailors could have picked off twenty of those blackened faced natives across there in the last ten minutes." He picked up the rifle that had been idly lying beside him in the trench and



HE DID NOT FIRE

adjusted the sight to two hundred yards. "Watch me lay out the next fellow who gets funny and jumps on top of his fort and shakes his fist at us."

The midshipmen watched him interestedly, for O'Neil was a dead shot.

Suddenly a fine looking warrior leaped upon the trench, brandishing his gun and head knife, using the forceful but picturesque Kapuan tongue in boasts and taunts, hurling them upon all those of his enemies across the river.

O'Neil calmly raised his gun, but he did not fire. He dropped it into the hollow of his arm.

"It's too much like murder," he said, and both midshipmen breathed a sigh of relief.

"This isn't war," Phil complained bitterly. "We are fighting children. I'd as soon shoot a schoolboy showing himself in bravado from the top of his snow fort as to shoot at those joyful warriors. To them fighting is fun. They do not realize that they are uselessly destroying human life."

"Look!" Sydney exclaimed in admiration, as a Kataafa warrior was seen to rush into the

river a few hundred yards above them and endeavor to reach the body of a native whom he had slain. A rain of bullets fell all around him, and as he reached the side of his victim, his head axe raised, he fell dead. So excited had both sides become that no thought of personal safety was given. Both sides stood upon the top of their trenches and uttered their savage cries of defiance. The Kataafa men who had cheered on their hero, exulting in the prospect of a trophy, saw themselves suddenly exposed to a disgrace.

"We ought to stop it," Sydney exclaimed. "Look at our men exposing themselves needlessly."

"You might as well try damming Niagara first," Phil returned. "It would be an easier job."

"There's the real thing for you," O'Neil cried, bringing his rifle up to his shoulder as a lithe Kataafa native darted across the intervening water scarcely half waist deep, swung the dead body of his friend upon his back and returned to his trenches unscathed.

"If they don't stop this foolishness," the sailor said, "I'm going to teach 'em a lesson."

He lowered his rifle from his shoulder. "I could have dropped him a half a dozen times," he complained, "and yet these wild savages have wasted a barrel of lead shooting at him, and not a single hit."

The excitement along the Fuisa River began to die down after this last piece of bravado. O'Neil and the midshipmen had sent word to the chiefs in their vicinity to save their ammunition.

About three o'clock those at the Fuisa River were much concerned over heavy musketry fire behind them and on the right flank of the allied position. A woman came along the road from Ukula, carrying fruit for her relatives in the trenches.

O'Neil spoke to her, inquiring the cause of the firing. She answered quite calmly and passed on down the trench.

"She says she heard Kataafa would attack along the Siumu road, and supposed that was the cause of the firing," O'Neil explained. "There goes the artillery," he exclaimed, as all distinctly heard the crash from the village in their rear where some English howitzers were mounted. "They must have driven

the natives back. Look out!" he cried suddenly.

There was no need for further warning. The midshipmen, glancing up over the top of the trench, saw the Kataafa warriors were beyond their trench and advancing toward the river, firing, gesticulating, taunting, dancing and singing. A hail of bullets met them from the Panu side; but nothing seemed able to stop the movement.

The contending factions were about equal in numbers. The Kataafa men having willingly abandoned their trench to fight in the open, their enemy, not to be outdone in chivalry, bravely mounted on top of their own earthworks and awaited the attack. Meanwhile both sides fired blindly. Neither side took time to aim. Even with such poor fire direction, however, many men on both sides were being hit.

O'Neil and the two midshipmen had gotten suddenly over their hesitancy in shooting down a native enemy, and their example was being followed by about fifty white men, after endeavoring in vain to keep their natives under cover.

"Pick out the leaders," O'Neil exclaimed. "I got that fellow. I am sorry! he was such a fine looker." Again he fired, and each time his exclamations told the result of his shot.

Phil and Sydney realized that it was not a matter of choice. That rush had to be stopped, even if the entire force against them was wiped out, and they loaded and fired eagerly, but carefully, every shot bringing down an enemy.

"They've had enough!" Sydney cried joyously. Those near had turned and were fleeing back across the stream. Once the panic had seized them, the entire Kataafa force was fleeing for cover.

"Now after them," O'Neil suggested to the midshipmen, and this same thought had apparently come to every white sailor along the loyal line. An English sub-lieutenant some hundred yards above had begun the sortie, and presently the whole line was in the river advancing rapidly after their fleeing foe.

Breathless, Phil found himself in the enemy's trenches. The natives had dashed on into the bush to pursue their broken foe.

The trench made by Kataafa was quickly

razed and again the loyal warriors were quietly, yet joyously, back in their own forts.

It was not until this lull in the fighting that the midshipmen realized the extent of the attack upon the center of the allies' position along the Siumu road. The firing seemed closer and in greater volume. The howitzers had been reënforced by Gatlings and pom-poms, or one-pounder automatic cannon, from the English ship.

"I say, that looks as if the big attack were down there," the sub-lieutenant exclaimed anxiously. He had come down to talk with the midshipmen. "Suppose you take your company and see if they need help. After that rush I think we have more than plenty to keep them off here."

Phil, Sydney and O'Neil led forth about one hundred excited natives on a run through Matautu. In front of the legations two companies of American sailors, forming the reserve for the flank which the midshipmen had just left, hurriedly joined on behind.

Ahead, in front of the Tivoli Hotel, the artillery could be seen firing down the Siumu road. The air was full of flying bullets, ap-

parently coming from all directions. The entire stretch of road from the American consulate was bullet swept. Phil saw that it was deserted, but he could not stop to take cover. It was evident that on the Siumu road the biggest attack was being made. As the natives and sailors approached Phil saw several companies of white men advancing from the other direction. He soon recognized the English from Kulinuu, coming to reënforce the center.

Lieutenant Gant, mounted upon a pony, in all that hail of bullets came galloping toward the midshipmen.

"Go straight down the road," he ordered. Phil marveled at his calmness. "They've driven our natives back almost into the town. The guns are shelling behind them. It's only making noise. We can't shoot into them for fear of hitting our own."

The extra three hundred arriving turned the tide of battle. The Panu natives, encouraged by their white officers and sailors from the war-ships, now turned and charged their enemy. The impetus of the reënforcements carried them through the front ranks of the enemy and into the middle of the horde.

Out in the jungle the natives spread out, and each line was quickly reënforced by squads of sailors.

By four o'clock the attack had been repulsed, and the loyal natives and their allies were again withdrawn into their forts. All the Kataafa forts taken had been destroyed.

Many heads were brought into the town, but these were ordered buried, and the natives, after some grumbling, finally complied.

Phil and Sydney saw the heads collected by native chiefs appointed by Lieutenant Gant. One head in the gruesome pile gave him a start that he will always remember. It was that once proudly carried by Captain "Bully" Scott. The grayish whiskers and long matted locks of once black hair, but now turning gray. The usually sun-brown face had turned to an ashen pallor. Yet the likeness in death was as vivid as in life.

Phil had the head taken up and wrapped in tapa cloth, and then carried it to Commander Tazewell.

In front of the Tivoli Hotel they found him.

Phil quickly explained his mission.

All retired inside the hotel while a box was ordered brought.

Phil laid his ghastly relic on the floor and gingerly unwrapped it.

All gazed upon it in silence. Commander Tazewell nodded, and Phil rewrapped the head carefully and placed it within the box.

As they left the hotel O'Neil brought up the native who claimed to have taken the head.

"He says he didn't kill him," O'Neil said, "but I think probably he did, and is afraid to say so. He thinks we are displeased because it was a white man."

"Who did it? Ask him," Phil ordered.

"He says a white man shot him. He saw it, and when the white man didn't take the head, he did," O'Neil replied, after a short conversation.

The native so closely questioned by these white officers was becoming very much concerned. His eyes rolled from side to side seeking apparently somebody to take his part. Finally he leaped away and grabbing a man by the arm dragged him excitedly toward his inquisitors.

It was Stump.

"He kill! He kill!" the native cried out pointing his finger at the surprised white man.

CHAPTER XXIII

CONCLUSION

Stump was not proud of his exploit. The lads saw that he trembled violently, and his face showed that his nerves were unstrung.

"It was my life or his," he said sorrowfully. "Klinger had put me in charge of the store when he was arrested. During the fight on the Siumu road I was inside the store. Scott and several natives came from the bush and made me go with them. I was afraid to refuse. They led me away. Some time later our party was attacked by the Panu men. They did not attack Captain Scott, who held me by the arm and told me he'd blow my head off if I ran away. When the Kataafa men were running away Scott saw that we must run too. He beat and kicked me to make me go faster. I had been wounded in the left arm." Here Stump showed his band-

aged arm. "The wound hurt me and made me desperate. By this time we were surrounded by Panu men. I appealed to them for help, but they only laughed. One man, however, came to me and handed me a gun. Scott did not see what was done; he was dragging me along toward the retreating Kataafa men.

"The next thing I knew," Stump declared, a strong fit of trembling seizing him at the thought, "I had stuck the muzzle of the gun close to his neck and pulled the trigger. He let go his hold of me and I ran. I heard the shouts and laughter of the natives behind me."

"I reckon you won't be hung for it," O'Neil said consolingly. "The killing of that scoundrel and pirate is probably the most useful thing for humanity you've ever done, Stump. Now I advise you to dig out on the next steamer and go home."

The defenders of Ukula at last were able to relax in a measure their vigilance. The Kataafa warriors had been badly shattered, and further attacks were not likely until they could replenish their store of ammunition.

The arrest of Klinger blocked one source of supply. Many thousands of rounds fitting the enemy's rifles had been found by the allied sailors after a search of the Kapuan firm's store. Kataafa had probably counted upon the capture of Ukula long enough to restock his expended ammunition.

The midshipmen dined that evening with the Lees. Alice was eager to hear the gruesome details of the fighting and was greatly surprised when the lads declared that neither they nor O'Neil had been wounded.

"How could you help being?" she asked doubtingly. "The air all afternoon was full of lead. We all hid behind furniture stacked up like a fort up-stairs. The house was hit, you know, lots of times."

"Where's Avao?" Phil asked; he had not seen her for several days.

"She was with her father in the trenches," Alice replied, admiration in her eyes. "She was here an hour ago and told us all about the fight."

"Yes," Miss Lee added smiling upon her enthusiastic sister, "Alice was restrained from being on the scene only by force. Fa-

ther and I had all we could do to keep her at home."

After dinner Admiral Spotts and Commander Tazewell came in to confer with Mr. Lee.

"I have just found out," the admiral said, "that the Herzovinian war-ship brought a refusal of annexation to Kataafa, and Count Rosen was informed that he must act in concert with other nations to prevent bloodshed. The count returns to-morrow in the mail steamer for Australia."

At daylight the next morning Lieutenant Gant led his entire native regiment over the road taken by the small force some days before. The enemy was not encountered until they arrived at the Vaileli plantation. There a few shots were exchanged, but the Kataafa men were not in force and quickly scattered into the bush. The advance guard under Tuamana pursued them and returned after a half hour's chase with several native heads, and besides carrying the body of a white man, who had been shot and killed fleeing with the Kataafa men. It was the missing marine orderly, Schultz.

The regiment returned over the same road recently traversed by the ill-fated party. The midshipmen and O'Neil sought for the Colt gun. Childers had dismounted the breach mechanism during that disastrous battle and brought it to the beach with him upon his retreat. The gun had been taken away by the Kataafa warriors, although they were unable to use it. No signs of bodies or arms were found; the victors had carried away all spoils of their vanquished enemy.

When the expedition reached Ukula, the mail steamer from San Francisco was in port. The admiral, the war-ship captains and the three consuls had held a meeting to discuss the instructions received in the mail from their respective governments.

"A commission has been appointed to finally decide the fate of Kapua," Commander Tazewell told the lads as they joined him after turning over their native company to its native chief. "We are sending word to Kataafa declaring a truce. He has retired with all his warriors to Saluafata. Klinger will carry the message and the mail steamer is to wait until he returns. Klinger has

agreed to leave the islands. He and Count Rosen go together."

The midshipmen were delighted. The war had ceased to be exciting. They felt that the useless killing of natives should stop. It had gone too far already. With Rosen, Klinger and Scott out of the way, a peaceful settlement would be possible.

They told the captain of the death of his unfaithful orderly and of burying him at Vaileli.

Commander Tazewell was thoughtful for several minutes. "Poor fellow," he said. "I suppose he could not withstand the golden bribe offered him."

Kataafa sent in word that he agreed to suspend hostilities and would remain in Saluafata, ten miles away from Ukula.

The mail steamer departed, carrying with it the two men who had overreached themselves in their patriotic endeavor to bring Kapua under the control of their own nation.

The American and English sailors and the natives loyal to Panu meanwhile garrisoned and preserved order in Ukula and over the surrounding country.

Stump was rewarded and sent home on a mail steamer, promising to look up his folks and turn over a new leaf.

One day, several weeks after the last fight, another American war-ship came to anchor in the harbor of Ukula. On board were three great commissioners of the treaty powers.

Two days later Phil and Sydney said good-bye to their friends in Ukula. The war-ships "Sitka" and "Sacramento" were under orders to return to the United States.

As the two war-ships lifted their anchors, many canoes filled with natives hung in the quiet water about them. The sweet plaintive air of the Kapuan farewell song floated up to the ears of the midshipmen, really sorry to leave behind those for whom they had formed a strong bond of friendship.

Some days later the midshipmen dined in the cabin with Commander Tazewell.

"What has Herzovinia gained in Kapua after all the years of stirring up uncertainty and strife?" Sydney asked earnestly.

"Her policy has been to prove to the other nations that the islands are not worth the trouble to govern them," the commander an-

swered. "She has proved that the three nation control cannot be carried on with peace. She has lost her own sailors in fighting rebels and we have lost ours.

"She still persists in her desire for the islands. England and America are almost on the point of giving up the struggle. You will find," he added, "that Herzovinia will be given most if not all of Kapua by the commission now working for a settlement there."

The midshipmen remembered this accurate summing up when a month or so later the decision of the commission was given out to the world.

"Know what you want, and always keep wanting it and trying to get it; it's a cinch that you can't miss it," was O'Neil's moral, derived from his Kapuan experiences.

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